United Nations A/56/PV.57

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

57th plenary meeting
Friday, 16 November 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gints Jegermanis, Chairman of the delegation of Latvia.

Mr. Jegermanis (Latvia): It is my honour to address the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the struggle against terrorism has become a clear priority on the international agenda. The United Nations is playing a key role in coordinating joint measures to eliminate international terrorism. My country reaffirms its commitment to be vigorous in handling this matter.

We must act on all levels — global, regional and national — if we are to succeed in combating terrorism. Today, the need for international cooperation has assumed new dimensions. To achieve sustainable results in eliminating terrorism, joint international action is mandatory.

Latvia strongly welcomes and supports Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Latvia is convinced that full and unconditional implementation of Council resolution 1373 (2001) is imperative for success in the suppression of terrorism. The financing of terrorism has to be prevented and eliminated. All action or inaction by States or individuals that allows the practice of terrorism has to be stopped. Cooperation and information exchange among States concerning terrorist activities has to be strengthened. Latvia welcomes the establishment of the Security Council Committee to monitor the implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

Latvia supports efforts undertaken by other international organizations acting on the regional level. As an aspiring member of the Euro-Atlantic community, Latvia plays its part in the common activities carried out by the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In order to harmonize regional measures to prevent acts of terrorism, an action plan for Central and Eastern European countries was adopted at the recent Warsaw conference on combating terrorism. Another important European framework for combating terrorism is the Council of Europe, which has already formulated a wide range of legal instruments intended to fight terrorism.

My country fully shares the position of the European Union that we must redouble our efforts to fight international terrorism. That includes both our commitment as members of the international community and the "homework" we have to do as individual States.

A high-level task force has been established in Latvia to coordinate national efforts against terrorism, including implementation of Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Latvia has initiated the national legislative process of ratifying the International Convention for the Suppression of the

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Financing of Terrorism, and it is foreseen that we will sign the Convention by the end of this year.

The Latvian Government has approved an action plan for combating terrorism. This is a set of measures aimed at strengthening my country's ability to prevent its territory, banking system and other assets from being used by terrorists. There should be no place where terrorists can hide from justice. Latvia has already formulated legislation in the area of preventing money laundering. Banks and other operators are obliged to report on suspicious transfers. The Government has submitted to the parliament a package of further amendments to the banking law and the law on the prevention of the laundering of proceeds derived from criminal activity.

As it defends the world from terrorism, the international community has to do its utmost to spare the innocent people of Afghanistan further suffering. Latvia fully supports the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and other parties in their efforts to bring about a fully inclusive political system in Afghanistan. My country welcomes Security Council resolution 1378 (2001). The Latvian Government has also taken the decision to provide humanitarian aid to the Afghan people through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

We believe that the priorities that existed before 11 September are all the more valid today. A year ago, heads of State or Government adopted the Millennium Declaration, which renewed the spirit of the United Nations and which clearly demonstrated that the world and its peoples need this Organization. Latvia attaches great importance to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, especially in relation to issues of human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rights of the child and conflict prevention. We consider that the follow-up process to the Millennium Summit should be an integral part of the work of the United Nations. International relations in the twenty-first century have to be based on values and principles set out in the Declaration.

The fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly demonstrated that the commitment that was put into the Millennium Declaration was genuine. The results of the General Assembly's special sessions on human settlements and on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance have set a number of goals at the State, regional and global levels. The process has started, and Latvia is actively participating in pursuit of the common goals.

The United Nations is the only global Organization charged with the fundamental task of saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and with the maintenance of lasting peace and international security. One of its most important tasks, therefore, involves peacekeeping operations.

My country has actively participated in United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operations since 1996. This year Latvia is continuing to provide support to stabilize the situation in the Balkans and is participating, with troops and personnel, in all United Nations-mandated, NATO-led operations in the Balkans, as well as in other operations and endeavours of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Latvia, which attaches great importance to peacekeeping operations, voluntarily increased its contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping budget starting in 2001.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court has been one of the priorities of the United Nations for a decade. My country signed the Rome Statute in 1999, and the Government will present to Parliament the ratification bill of the Statute and drafts of the necessary amendments to our national legislation as soon as possible. Latvia also hopes to be among the first 60 States to ratify the Statute.

This is an important session of the General Assembly for Latvia and for its people. This year marks a decade since Latvia joined the United Nations as a free and independent country. The United Nations was the first international organization that Latvia joined, after 50 years of occupation. The United Nations has a special meaning for Latvia. Latvia's joining the United Nations demonstrates the commitment of my country to rejoin the international community and to take an active part in international events and processes.

In these 10 years, Latvia has made great headway in its development, and this growth encompasses a variety of realms. Latvia's foreign policy is rooted in

the observance of international law, the development of human rights and democracy and the protection of universally accepted human values. The top priorities of Latvian foreign policy continue to be joining the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These are not goals in themselves, but, rather, means to ensure sustainable development. Our foreign policy priorities also include good-neighbourly relations, bilateral cooperation and active participation in international organizations.

I have the honour to announce that Latvia is changing its status from that of aid recipient to that of donor country, in order to provide its support to others through both financial assistance and the sharing of experiences. Latvia has begun to elaborate its concept of a donor country. We are looking forward to the implementation of this concept and are assisting those who are in urgent need of our help.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of the work that has been carried out. I am convinced that we, as Member States, will continue to spare no effort in safeguarding the principles and ideals for which the United Nations stands.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. John Dauth, Chairman of the delegation of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Sir, let me begin, like others, by congratulating you on having been elected President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Let me also very warmly commend you on your commitment to making the most efficient use of the Assembly's time, including — if I may say — by beginning meetings punctually. I also want to join other speakers in congratulating the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and the United Nations more generally on their heartily deserved receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September in Washington, D.C., and here in New York City were not just attacks on the United States. Australia, along with more than 80 other nations, lost innocent civilians. We are united in our grief for the victims and their families. Australia condemns these attacks and reaffirms unequivocally that terrorism is never justified and must never be tolerated.

Australia has joined the international coalition against terrorism. We have invoked our mutual security pact for the first time with the United States, and we are contributing military forces to the campaign against those responsible for the 11 September attacks.

The international community is obliged to close ranks against terrorism. We must starve terrorists of their support — financial, political and moral. We must deny terrorists safe haven. We must bring terrorists to account.

Australia commends Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September, which targets comprehensively the terrorist menace. We will work closely with the Committee on Counter-Terrorism of the Security Council.

Australia has introduced new measures to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorism and is already party to all but one of the 12 international counter-terrorism instruments.

A comprehensive convention against terrorism is potentially a very important symbol of global commitment on this issue. As the Assembly is aware, Australia has taken a leading role in the negotiations, reflecting our strong commitment to strengthening the international legal framework. While we are encouraged by the progress this past month, we join the Secretary-General in urging the parties to conclude the convention without delay.

The events of 11 September underline how important it is that we maintain and strengthen international non-proliferation regimes governing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. If we want to prevent the spread of ballistic missiles and associated technology — and if we want to strengthen mechanisms relating to conventional weapons — then we also need a stronger commitment to other arms control and disarmament instruments as well.

Let me turn now to East Timor. We all have a deep interest in a stable, secure, viable and democratic East Timor. East Timor is no longer an emergency, but, instead, an emerging nation.

However, much more needs to be done. East Timor remains vulnerable, and the role of the United Nations is not complete. We need, after independence, an integrated United Nations mission of civilians, police and peacekeepers, under a single Security

Council mandate funded from United Nations assessed contributions.

Australia therefore welcomes the Security Council President's statement of 31 October endorsing the Secretary-General's recommendations for a United Nations successor mission in East Timor. We look forward to working with others over the coming months to set a solid and sensible mandate for a successor mission.

Cooperative relations between East Timor and Indonesia are key to East Timor's longer-term security and to that of the region as a whole. We very much welcome steps by both sides to resolve outstanding issues.

We welcome progress by the Indonesian Government to resolve the situation in refugee camps in West Timor, and we urge continued efforts to ensure security and to facilitate the safe return of refugees.

Justice and reconciliation are important to East Timor's longer-term stability and prosperity. Australia welcomes steps by President Megawati Soekarnoputri to expand the jurisdiction of the ad hoc human rights court and her Government's commitment to bring to justice those who have perpetrated human rights crimes in East Timor. That commitment was reconfirmed in a most welcome way in the Assembly yesterday by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Mr. Hassan Wirajuda.

Australia will continue to support East Timor generously. We have an agreement to share resources from the Timor Sea. We are helping to reduce poverty in East Timor and we are building East Timorese capacity to govern peacefully and democratically. We urge others to support East Timor. This is our chance, collectively in the international community, to ensure that the United Nations historic mission in East Timor is remembered as a success.

Let me talk about what we in Australia call "people-smuggling". Australia has a proud history as a major country of migration. We are, as a result of over a century of planned and managed legal migration, a tolerant multicultural society. We will continue as a country of migration and we will continue to take more than our fair share of refugees.

Regrettably, Australia is also increasingly a favoured target for illegal migration, assisted by individuals and criminal syndicates engaged in the pernicious crime of people-smuggling. Many other countries — as either transit or destination countries — are also affected by this problem. As with other transnational crimes, combating the phenomenon of people-smuggling requires not just national, but also concerted regional and multilateral action.

People-smugglers are primarily organized crime syndicates. They exploit their victims. They find their clients among people who have experienced conflict or persecution, economic downturn or extreme environmental breakdown. They target those desperate for a better life. The loss recently of more than 350 lives, when a people-smuggling boat headed for Australia sank, is a tragic reminder of the human costs involved and of the callousness of people-smugglers.

Irregular migration, facilitated by people-smuggling, undermines the integrity of the international protection system. All countries share an interest in protecting and strengthening the international protection system. To do so, we must tackle the problem of people-smuggling. A year ago, at the Millennium Summit, leaders committed us to fight people-smuggling and other transnational crimes. We should redouble our efforts to do so. We need coordinated, comprehensive approaches and concerted international action to address all its aspects. Root causes in source countries need to be addressed. The humanitarian and other needs of displaced persons in countries of first asylum need to be addressed. Transit countries and countries of destination need to cooperate more effectively.

Australia is working closely with its neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen our capacity to prevent and deter people-smuggling and to bring perpetrators to justice. This will continue to be a high priority for my Government. We will also continue to contribute to broader international efforts to deal with the causes of irregular migration. These efforts, which have the protection needs of refugees at their core, will continue while we work with others in our region and internationally to combat illegal migration and people-smuggling.

Afghans fleeing the devastation of their homeland pose a particular challenge to the international community. A renewed focus and a more coordinated response are needed. Australia supports the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and those of the countries of first asylum to protect refugees in South-West Asia. We have

advocated, consistently and strongly, a comprehensive response to the Afghan situation and substantially increased our assistance to displaced and vulnerable Afghans in South-West Asia.

The international community faces grave new challenges that threaten global peace and prosperity. At the same time, as the Secretary-General said in his statement, the challenges that faced us before 11 September — poverty, disease, development — have not diminished. The need for international cooperation has never been greater. It is therefore tremendously important that agreement was reached in Doha to launch the development round of world trade liberalization. Free trade, including in agriculture, offers benefits for all countries and is crucial for developing countries to overcome poverty.

Finally, I want to say that Australia stands ready to support international efforts to combat international terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Australia stands ready to ensure that recent United Nations successes — such as in East Timor — help create vibrant and sustainable democracies in which people can be assured of their future and that of their children. Australia stands ready to contribute to sustained international action against people-smuggling at source, in transit and at destination. Australia urges that this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly makes substantial progress towards those same goals.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Said Abdella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Eritrea.

Mr. Abdella (Eritrea) (*spoke in Arabic*): Please allow me to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Eritrea, warm congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I am confident that, under your wise and able leadership, our deliberations will come to a fruitful conclusion. The Eritrean delegation assures you of its full cooperation and support.

May I also extend to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, our deep appreciation for the skilful and wise manner in which he conducted the deliberations of the fifty-fifth session.

I also wish to take this opportunity to extend heartfelt congratulations, on behalf of the people and Government of the State of Eritrea, to Mr. Kofi Annan upon his well-deserved election for a second term. I am certain that our Organization will benefit immensely during his second term, as it did during his first, from his vision, wisdom, competent leadership and selfless dedication. I also wish to congratulate him and the United Nations on their well-deserved awarding of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

Allow me to express, on behalf of the people and Government of the State of Eritrea, profound sorrow and to extend sincere condolences to the people and Government of the United States of America in this their time of grief following the hateful attacks of 11 September. We also wish to extend our heartfelt sympathy and condolences for the victims of the painful aeroplane crash of 12 November.

The Government of Eritrea condemns the barbaric act committed against innocent civilians by a few craven terrorists. From the outset, we declared solidarity with the people and Government of the United States against those heinous acts.

Terrorism violates the most basic of human rights: the right to life. Therefore, we must all unite in the protection of all our citizens against these dastardly, desperate acts perpetrated by individuals or organized terrorist networks. There should be no impunity for such criminals.

Humankind entered the new millennium with optimism and hope — and for good reason. It had recognized, through bitter experience, the folly of war and conflict and the virtue of peace, good-neighbourliness and cooperative relations. It had had the opportunity to review past achievements and errors and to identify sources of strength and weakness. It had evolved lofty norms, values and principles. It had established refined procedures and created effective mechanisms to guarantee their implementation.

Unfortunately, however, humankind had not yet mustered the necessary determination or the collective will to translate that vision into reality. It is evident that it has not yet learned the ways of comprehensive peace. The full blooming of a culture of peace and development remains so near and yet so distant.

Consequently, two years into the new millennium, we continue to witness with dismay immense poverty and want in the midst of massive wealth in the world, deprivation in spite of the enormous advances in science and technology, wilful violations of human

rights and manifestations of mutual hatred and hostility.

The statistics are dismal. Yet, we must not be unduly alarmed, if only because it is too early to be discouraged by unfulfilled and unkept promises. On the contrary, we must decide to confront the challenges, including the depressing disparity between the rich and the poor, and issues of war and peace and violations of human rights.

We must collectively address the new forces that are being unleashed by science and technology, including globalization. Globalization can serve as an effective instrument for establishing an equitable and just relationship between the rich and the poor and for promoting sustainable development to the mutual benefit of all. However, this can be achieved only if a cooperative mechanism is established immediately, during this critically early stage of the twenty-first century, before we are overtaken by the speed of the technology and information revolution. It is equally important that the capacities of the poor nations be increased without delay in order to ensure their effective participation in the global economy.

It must also be acknowledged that peace, security and stability are closely linked to development. It need not be emphasized that there is no development without peace, and no peace without security. To this end, all efforts must also include development concerns.

The world continues to be plagued by wars and conflicts that have spilled over from the previous century, in spite of the international community's efforts and full commitment to peace, security and stability.

The African continent has perhaps fared the worst in the last few years, as it has been beleaguered by repeated economic catastrophes, political disruptions and inter-State and intra-State conflicts.

It is a source of deep concern to us that globalization has had a severely negative impact on African economies. It has deepened their marginalization and kept them from benefiting from the global economy. Africa suffers more than any other region from extreme poverty and, indeed, from recurrent famine. Plagues like malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diarrhoea and a host of other debilitating and fatal tropical diseases have, in many cases, reached biblical proportions. The decimation of populations has had horrendous consequences on many already weak economies.

In addition to economic crises and poverty, conflicts, wars and civil strife have prominently afflicted Africa during the past decade and a half. In 1999, close to 20 conflicts were wreaking havoc on the continent. It was in acknowledgement of the gravity of the matter that the Organization of African Unity Summit, held in Algiers in 1999, decided to declare 2000 as the year for ending conflicts and giving momentum to peace.

It was an auspicious year. There were encouraging signs in the Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a comprehensive peace agreement was signed between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Yet much remains to be done. It is encouraging to note that Africans are making great and sustained efforts to resolve the conflicts in Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, the Great Lakes region, Somalia and the Sudan at the regional level.

In the same vein, a just and durable solution to the problem in the Middle East must be found through the creation of a fully independent Palestinian State.

The international community must be involved more meaningfully in assisting the peoples of these countries. Yet, the primary responsibility for resolving conflict, achieving national reconciliation and establishing peace, security and stability lies with the peoples and leaders of these countries. It must also be emphasized that, while any regional assistance rendered is to be appreciated, it must be predicated upon the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the assisted countries. Such assistance should be based on lofty principles and aimed at serving the interests and well-being of the countries in question.

The Horn of Africa has been a zone of conflict for the past four decades. Peace, security, stability and development are the collective responsibility of the States of the region. It behoves them to earnestly promote, protect and consolidate cooperative relations on the basis of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, renunciation of the threat or use of force, peaceful settlement of disputes, good-neighbourly relations and peaceful coexistence.

Since its independence in 1993, the State of Eritrea has espoused national security and development

policies and programmes based on the premise that our security and development interests are closely linked to regional security and prosperity. To this end, it actively engaged itself in the revitalization of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the propagation of IGAD's new mission. IGAD is now fully engaged in peacemaking and conflict resolution and coordinating cooperative efforts among its member States. In this context, my delegation wishes to extend special thanks to President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti for their dedicated, unbiased and untiring efforts to bring peace to the Sudan and Somalia respectively.

The search for durable peace, security and stability must be the collective commitment of all member States of IGAD and it must be anchored solely in the welfare and best interests of the peoples concerned. Peace in Somalia is vital, and it should not be held hostage by any Government under the pretext of preserving its national security. History and the Somali people will make them responsible if they become an obstacle or try to hinder peacemaking efforts in the region.

The world welcomed the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, a comprehensive peace Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia. It has expressed the hope that the implementation of the Agreement will proceed smoothly and will lead to a durable peace.

Both countries owe it to their people and to the entire international community to establish a durable peace as soon as possible. We face the challenge of meeting the hopes and great expectations of our people and of the international community. Eritrea solemnly reiterates not only its abiding commitment to the peace Agreement and its speedy implementation, but also its undertaking to fully cooperate with all its partners in the peace process.

The peace process has made significant progress. However, I should like to inform the Assembly that key provisions of the peace Agreement remain unimplemented because the Government of Ethiopia has failed to comply with its obligations. It has, to date, obstructed the establishment of the temporary security zone and the establishment of a direct air route between the capitals of the two countries. Moreover, it has refused to submit operationally useful information on its minefields in the temporary security zone and to release civilian detainees and war prisoners.

It has also resumed the deportation of Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin, in blatant violation of the comprehensive peace Agreement between the two countries. The last round of deportation occurred on 25 June 2001 and was strongly condemned by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Under these circumstances, it is surprising that Ethiopia has recently accused Eritrea of placing its army on high alert and of deploying its troops along the common border. This baseless accusation, refuted by the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Eritrea and Ethiopia, is designed to hide Ethiopia's plans and intentions to sabotage the peace process by provoking hostilities.

The Government of Eritrea has consistently undertaken, in good faith, to comply fully with the provisions of the Algiers Agreement, in spite of the intransigence of the Government of Ethiopia and its violation of it.

The Government of Eritrea wishes to extend sincere appreciation to, and applauds the effort of, the peace partners, particularly the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of African Unity and the Governments of the United States and Algeria. It also extends its profound thanks to the friends of UNMEE for their immense contribution to the peace process. At the same time, it urges the international community to exert extra effort to persuade the Ethiopian Government to fulfil its legal obligations under the Algiers peace Agreement and the United Nations Charter without delay.

Eritrea has always been consistent in its condemnation of terrorism, irrespective of the perpetrators or victims. It has itself become the victim of terrorist attacks by elements organized, financed, trained and armed by the Ethiopian Government. These terrorists are often joined by Ethiopian troops and militias in their heinous crimes against innocent civilians. We urge the international community to condemn these barbarous acts and to demand that the Ethiopian Government cease its activities and hostile acts as soon as possible.

In conclusion, despite its regrettable experience with the United Nations in the early days, Eritrea is fully convinced that the Organization has played a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and security and has contributed immensely to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as to economic development and social progress.

Eritrea is fully and unequivocally committed to strengthening the United Nations. To this end, we believe that the United Nations must proceed with a process of change and reform that will reinforce the principle of equality among all its Members and guarantee its impartiality and neutrality. Hence, we fully endorse the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on membership of the Security Council and the question of a periodic review of its structure and functions. We are confident that much will be achieved under the visionary leadership of Mr. Kofi Annan during his second term of office.

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Antonieta Rosa Gomes, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mrs. Gomes (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Guinea-Bissau and its delegation, to express sincere condolences to the people and Government of the United States and to the people and Government of the Dominican Republic for the tragic event of 12 November in New York , resulting in great loss of life.

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, which will certainly be crowned with success thanks to your experienced diplomatic skills and deep understanding of this universal Organization.

The delegation of Guinea-Bissau, which I have the honour of heading, would like to assure you at this time of its full cooperation in carrying out your noble mandate. I also extend my warm congratulations to your predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, on the constructive way in which he led the work of the last session.

In addition, I would like to reaffirm my Government's confidence in and regard for the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his clear leadership of the United Nations and his incessant search for peaceful and realistic solutions to the various conflicts and problems that affect humanity.

The Nobel Peace Prize, awarded in October to our Secretary-General and to the United Nations, which he so ably leads, proves not only his commitment to the attainment of peace and security, but also his important role of working in the interests of humanity. For this reason, I extend to him my most sincere congratulations and wishes for success in the second term of office to which he was elected, and encourage him to continue his efforts to reform and adapt the Organization to the needs of our time, in the service of peace, progress and international cooperation.

In this vein, I urge the widening and deepening of the reforms already undertaken and appeal once again for a reform of the Security Council to increase the number of both permanent and non-permanent members and to bring the right of veto into line with the needs of today.

This first General Assembly session of the twenty-first century represents, as was stated in the Millennium Declaration, a historic challenge for the building of new international relations. At the Millennium Summit, our dignitaries worked hard to envision the role that the Organization must play in the twenty-first century. They solemnly reaffirmed their commitment to the noble ideals of the United Nations, as well as their conviction that the role of the United Nations is indispensable in the service of peace, progress and international cooperation, and in support of the primacy of law. During that event, our heads of State and Government also discussed new perspectives from which to confront the great challenges of globalization for the promotion of a new international human order.

In this context, the year 2001 was marked by important international conferences: the recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which took place in Durban, and whose final Declaration not only defines slavery as a "crime against humanity" but also launches an appeal for appropriate and efficient measures to reverse the consequences of slavery. It also recognizes that those "historical injustices" contribute to poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, economic disparities and the insecurity of many peoples, especially in developing countries.

Despite those prospects for a new historical perspective, this session takes place at a moment of deep disquiet for our countries and peoples. In fact, the wave of attacks perpetrated on 11 September this year against the Pentagon in Washington and the World Trade Center in New York, just a few kilometres from the Assembly, is reason for great concern for my Government and the President of the Republic, Mr. Kumba Yalá, who promptly and strongly condemned the cowardly terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States of America. Today I reaffirm before the Assembly our unreserved condemnation of terrorism in all its forms, wherever or whenever it occurs and whatever its origins, since it constitutes a threat to security, peaceful relations between States, democratic institutions and the fulfilment of human rights.

Today more than ever before, it is necessary to adopt a broad strategy for the entire international community to combat terrorism. In that context, Guinea-Bissau appeals for greater international cooperation on the issue of terrorism, specifically, through the ratification of already existing regional and international instruments and the approval, within the context of the United Nations, of a comprehensive convention that covers all aspects of terrorism, from a universally accepted definition to its suppression.

It is in precisely this regard that my country, Guinea-Bissau, became a party to the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in 1999 at Algiers, and to the Dakar Declaration on this same scourge, issued last October. We are determined to accelerate the ratification and implementation processes of all the agreements that seek to fight terrorism.

The beginning of the twenty-first century, which coincides with the threshold of the new millennium, is marked by areas of tension and armed conflict that threaten peace and security and fuel the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms. In this context, the subregional and regional organizations, with the support of the international community, through the United Nations, are fully engaged in the search for political solutions to conflicts. From Sierra Leone to Angola, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Burundi, from Somalia to Kosovo, from East Timor to the Middle East, the ghosts of conflict still hover as we seek to find solutions to existing conflicts.

At present in Sierra Leone, a country of our subregion, the Lomé Agreement, concluded under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the subsequent success of the United Nations-supported programme for disarming the parties involved in the conflict, allow us to hope for a legitimate peace.

In Angola, a member of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, cruel and destabilizing acts continue to take place, causing enormous pain to our Angolan brothers, who have endured the nightmare of four decades of war. I would like to express our solidarity with the Angolan people and Government, and appeal for dialogue as part of the solution to that conflict.

In East Timor, with the elections for the Constituent Assembly already held, an important step was taken in the transition to the independence that will be proclaimed in May next year, and towards its acceptance as a fully fledged member of global society. We hope that the international community will continue to offer its valuable assistance to our Maubere brothers, who can finally aspire to rebuild their country in peace.

In the Middle East, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is at the crux of the situation. It is in that context that we appeal to the parties, in accordance with the Mitchell plan, to implement the accords without delay and reaffirm the fundamental principles established at Madrid and Oslo, as well as the subsequent agreements. This requires the parties to abstain from all actions that endanger the peace process and all activity that is contrary to international law.

Finally, the embargoes imposed upon certain countries, such as Cuba, continue to be a source of concern because of their very negative repercussions on the vulnerable populations of those countries, above all women and children. The populations involved appeal for dialogue with a view to a definitive solution to those issues.

The sombre scene characterized by areas of conflict and tension in the world, particularly in Africa, places on us a moral obligation to continue to act with even greater determination and courage to end those conflicts and the sources of those tensions. Along these lines, allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, on his last report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable

development in Africa, a document of great interest for the African continent.

The global economic situation — particularly after the events of 11 September — and its negative impact, felt especially in the least developed countries, is also an issue of concern for my Government. The solutions to the specific problems on the international agenda require not only concerted action, but also both bilateral and multilateral contacts, which Guinea-Bissau has always supported. My Government believes in concerted and combined efforts with a view to fostering economic growth and full employment in a fairer global economy. Bearing in mind that a majority of African countries have agriculture as their economic base, we appeal to our development partners, such as the European Union, the United States and Japan, among others, to open their markets to the flow of agricultural products from our countries.

By virtue of its important mission to generate an authentic North-South dialogue, the United Nations is our universal conscience, whose highest priority is to meet the needs of developing countries. The programmes of action originating from the series of major conferences of the last decade and from other important meetings which took place this year are of special importance in that they contribute to identifying needs, formulating objectives and defining strategies for the realization of sustainable development rooted in sustainable economic growth, social justice and the protection of the environment. We are now waiting for those results to be translated into concrete benefits, thus opening the way for a better global economic situation.

As all Members know, Guinea-Bissau continues to live with the effects of the absurd and disastrous armed conflict of 1998 and 1999, which, apart from the irreparable loss of human lives, caused deep trauma to our entire society and destroyed or damaged the country's existing basic infrastructure. In addition, the marked decline in foreign aid and the slump in export prices of cashew nuts, our main export commodity, constitute the basic reason for our lack of resources and for the increase in poverty. This runs counter to the interests of our citizens and makes them more vulnerable.

However, an unshakeable will to rebuild the country has led my Government, together with some development partners, to redouble its efforts to define a strategy for sustainable development and to take measures in the realm of human rights and reconciliation. The programme for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and for national reconciliation, the multi-year convergence programmes for stability, growth and solidarity elaborated in the framework of the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the programmes of demobilization, reintegration and social reinsertion of combatants, the fight against poverty, the fight against AIDS and other programmes are clear examples of the will and commitment of the Government to create a new reality for society and a new action programme intended to effect change in that society. The President of the Republic, Mr. Kumba Yalá, is the main mentor and guarantor of those programmes by virtue of the sacred responsibility given to him, the highest ranking official, by the voters of Guinea-Bissau.

The programme of action requires not only internal but also external efforts. That is why the Government is strengthening its cooperation with other countries at the subregional, regional and international levels. Despite all its efforts, Guinea-Bissau continues to need the valuable assistance of its development partners and of the international community to face the difficult economic and social challenges that lie ahead. In that regard, we appeal to the international community to bolster its support for Guinea-Bissau and to make donors aware of the importance of participating actively in next year's round table on assistance to my country.

The celebration this year of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and of the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which coincides with the fifty-third anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is a cause for satisfaction for my Government. This is reflected in the creation of a inter-ministerial committee on human rights tasked with overseeing respect for human rights in our country and promoting education and awareness programmes on human rights issues.

Since his landslide election to the presidency of the nation, the President of the Republic, Mr. Kumba Yalá, has increased his contacts at various levels, with friendship visits to Guinea, the Gambia, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Sierra Leone and other countries with the aim of strengthening cooperation and

contributing to peaceful solutions within the subregional framework.

It is in that same spirit that the authorities of my country have maintained vigilance in the area of the border with Senegal, with the objective of guaranteeing the security and tranquillity of our populations in that northern zone.

In this first year of the new millennium and of the twenty-first century, despite certain echoes of optimism, poverty and underdevelopment unfortunately persist and have been aggravated in many areas of the world, particularly in the least developed countries, among which is Guinea-Bissau. The developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, continue to be marginalized in the world economy and to be victims of extreme poverty, due mainly to decreased official development assistance, to the lack of productive human resources, to the weakness of domestic and foreign investments, to the slump in commodity prices, to the problems of debt, to HIV/AIDS and also, obviously, to armed conflicts.

To overcome this situation it is imperative to ensure the integration of developing countries into the world economy and to oppose the marginalization of those countries, ensuring sustainable, accelerated and durable economic development as well as the elimination of poverty, inequality and misery. In that context, we are pleased at the results of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which took place in May this year at Brussels. We are certain that the results of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to take place at Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, will be translated into concrete action that can reverse those negative trends.

Cooperation frameworks include the Lomé Convention of the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries; the Tokyo International Conference on African Development; the United States African Growth and Opportunity Act; and the Genoa decision of the Group of 8 on the creation of a fund for the fight against contagious diseases and AIDS on the African continent. We look forward to the latter group's next summit on African problems.

Because of the particularly difficult economic situation it faces, Africa continues to look for realistic solutions for the continent and is giving clear proof of its determination to improve the economies of the countries of the continent. Beyond the programmes of structural adjustment and other development programmes that have been adopted for the continent, the New African Initiative, resulting from the merger of the plans presented by the heads of State of Senegal and of South Africa, has come at an opportune time. It is an African plan for Africans that provides developed countries a historic opportunity to forge a genuine partnership based on mutually beneficial self-interest. The Initiative, adopted unanimously at the most recent summit of the Organization of African Unity, held at Lusaka, should be implemented with the utmost speed. We appeal to the entire international community, and to our development partners in particular, to support the Initiative, which encompasses the relaunching of our economies, debt reduction and the fight against AIDS.

It is regrettable that the response of our development partners has not always been commensurate with the degree of sacrifice that has been endured or with the dimensions of the problems that have been identified. That is a paradox. It is also a paradox that the decisions of major international conferences should not be reflected in practical, concrete measures to implement those decisions.

The new collective challenge is to bring to light the image of a world of equality, dignity, equity and international solidarity, all translated into economic and social cooperation and genuine social adjustment with the human being as its central point of reference.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

Mr. Ilves (Estonia): First of all, allow me to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan and all of my colleagues on having received the Nobel Peace Prize. There is no doubt that without the United Nations, our world would be much less secure, with far fewer prospects for resolving conflicts. I would also like to commend the efforts that have been made during the last few years to reform this Organization so that it can better deal with the new challenges it has to face. In addition, please allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on having been elected President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September, it became apparent that, when we are all confronted with a common threat, many existing disputes and

differences become insignificant. The United Nations Member States together have condemned the terrorist acts. It is of the utmost importance to maintain that unity and persistently to reinforce it with concrete actions. Terrorism is the ultimate challenge to our common values, and our struggle against that threat has only begun.

The destruction and elimination of terrorist networks is a time-consuming task for which there are no instant solutions. The United Nations does, however, have effective measures at its disposal for fighting terrorism: the international conventions that the United Nations has adopted over the years and the sanctions that can be applied to hamper terrorist activities. The ratification of those conventions and the enforcement of those sanctions by every United Nations Member State is, at this moment, one of those truly important tasks that it behoves all Members to carry out. I am glad to be able to confirm that Estonia has either already ratified, or is the middle of the parliamentary procedures for ratifying, all of the appropriate United Nations conventions. Estonia has taken all necessary steps to apply Security Council resolutions 1333 (2000) and 1373 (2001).

Estonia has improved and intensified cooperation and the exchange of information with its neighbours and partners. We have expressed our solidarity and unreserved support to the United States in the fight against terrorism. We have aligned ourselves with the European Union's 21 September anti-terrorist summit's final document and action plan. With our neighbours Latvia and Lithuania, we have also formulated common measures for preventing possible terrorist attacks and for applying coordinated tactics in case we become the victims of terrorist activities. We have intensified international border controls and police cooperation.

Many programmes that had been adopted earlier are now proving to be extremely useful in the struggle against terrorism. The Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, for example, has given a high rating to Estonia's anti-money-laundering legislation. A recent audit shows that Estonian banks have no contractual relations with any organization or individual alleged to be connected with international terrorism.

The international political atmosphere in Estonia's immediate vicinity, the Baltic Sea region, is, I am glad to report, peaceful, which is conducive to stable development and good-neighbourly cooperation. Up to now, Estonians have hardly had to deal with the direct results of terrorism. But this fall's terrorist attacks were aimed directly at international peace and stability. This means that now we, too, keenly sense the danger that faces us all. This places the United Nations, as the world Organization, at the centre of the ongoing struggle.

The reform processes launched during the last few years to reorganize and reform the United Nations are also appropriate for dealing with current problems. Now, however, we must ask ourselves if there is some way that we can speed up and intensify these reforms so as to better deal with the urgency of the prevailing situation. In our new situation, I would bring forth three well-worn and proven principles that apply not only specifically to the United Nations, but to other aspects of international cooperation as well.

First, we must once again ask ourselves how exactly each of us can make the most fruitful contribution. Secondly, what can we do to increase the efficiency of the Organization? And thirdly, I would like to stress the principle of openness.

First of all, let us deal with the matter of every Member's individual contribution. The United Nations brings together Member States with a wide range of resources and capabilities. Even the most successful nation's reserves and capacities, however, have a limit. Therefore, it is only natural that every Member State carefully evaluate how it can be the most useful. It is equally important for Members to realistically assess how high a level of development they have achieved, and, when appropriate, to refrain from accepting aid in favour of those who need it the most.

This is the flip side of development. As one rises out of poverty and underdevelopment, one should also grow up and become more responsible, acknowledging that obligations rise along with living standards. Last year, for example, Estonia decided to relinquish its right to pay reduced contributions to the peacekeeping budget. For Estonia, to give up the rights to such a discount was not a step taken lightly — it was a decision based on the Government's realization that with our rapid development, we had acquired new responsibilities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had, after all, found that Estonia had developed to the point where the UNDP could

terminate the activities of its mission in Estonia in December 2000.

Of course, we miss working together with such a useful cooperative agency as the UNDP representation in Estonia. Yet we realize quite well that there are many regions in the world which badly need their assistance, while for Estonia the presence of the UNDP mission is no longer essential. In other words, maintaining the representation would be irresponsible on our part, as it would use resources for which there is a greater need elsewhere. This means that Estonia's cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies has qualitatively advanced to a higher level. This has been clearly demonstrated by the founding of the United Nations Building project in Estonia. The intention is to have the representation of various United Nations agencies all under one roof. The fact that the United Nations is gaining importance in the eyes of the Estonian public is evidenced by, inter alia, the fact that the Estonian United Nations Association has been steadily increasing its activities.

During the last few years, Estonia has clearly progressed from an aid recipient to an aid provider. This transformation has been confirmed by, among others, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee, which, in its 2000 yearbook, lists Estonia for the first time as a donor nation. Therefore, those who assisted Estonia during its now completed transition phase can clearly see now that their aid has borne fruit. We, in turn, are willing to share the experience that we have gained in the course of the last 10 years. As a matter of fact, we have already established cooperative efforts of this nature with several countries.

I spoke earlier about how every Member State has an obligation to evaluate how it can best help the United Nations in its endeavours. Of equal importance are the ongoing efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Organization as a whole. In this light, I would emphasize two aspects: reform of the Security Council and the Brahimi report on improving United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We must ensure that our cooperative efforts for solving the urgent problems confronting us do not become entangled in the deficiencies of the structure or the working order of the Security Council. We all know very well what these deficiencies are, and therefore our common goal is quite clear: to increase the representativeness, transparency and efficiency of the Security Council. The enlivened discussions and the shift towards greater openness in the work of the Security Council give us hope. We supported the strenuous efforts of Harri Holkeri, the General Assembly's previous President, to intensify the activities of the Working Group dealing with reform. We share the view that it is time to move from discussions on to the negotiating phase.

Estonia supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership, just as we support reform of the Security Council's decision-making process. In the confrontational context of the cold war, the veto in the Security Council was a means for the great Powers to protect their interests. Even then it was avoided, and any light-handed use of the veto resulted in condemnation by the international community. Now, however, the sense of trust among the Security Council members has grown immensely, and a limitation of the use of the veto would be an appropriate reflection of this improved atmosphere.

The composition of the Council, which still reflects the power relationships that prevailed in 1945, is another issue that cries out for resolution. From the inception of the United Nations that year until just a decade ago, the people of my country were afforded only rare glimpses of the goings-on at the United Nations through fissures in the iron curtain. When we finally established our independence in 1991, we emerged into the international arena only to discover that the Security Council, judging by its composition, was still stuck back in the year 1945. This strikes Estonia as being anachronistic, if not wrong-headed. The guarantors and greatest contributors to stability in the world have, in the course of half a century, changed fundamentally. We need not fear opening a discussion on whether the moral and legal reasoning underlying Security Council membership in the wake of the Second World War is still appropriate in the post-cold-war era — or this post-11 September era. Nothing underscores the need to come back to this question more than the challenge that we are currently facing.

Participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations is an inseparable part of Estonia's national security policy. We therefore fully support the endeavours outlined in the Brahimi report concerning the reformation of United Nations peacekeeping.

Estonia is in full agreement with the report's comprehensive and long-term approach to the prevention and solution of conflicts. Although we often talk about the need for limiting expenditures, in this case it is clear that in order to increase efficiency, means must be found for increasing the budget of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are pleased to say, as I mentioned earlier, that we have contributed to this effort to increase those expenditures.

Let me proceed to my third theme, namely, openness. Openness and transparency are essential for many reasons. Terrorist attacks have been directed at everyday interpersonal relations and at our usual means of communication, such as the postal system and air travel. Therefore, we need to make concerted efforts to ensure that the movement of people and ideas will not suffer from the threat of terrorism. Terrorism itself is fed primarily by misinformation, disinformation and misperceptions. Here too, openness is important; it is essential to communicate our intentions and ideas both to those who support us as well as to those who doubt us.

Openness is also essential in more conventional situations, for example, in the traditional political decision-making process, be it in the international or domestic arena. Here, Estonia can share experiences in the sphere of information technology. Last year, the Estonian Government began to hold its cabinet meetings electronically. All information concerning government activities now moves through electronic channels — through the Internet. In addition to speeding up decision-making and providing monetary savings, information now becomes available to the general public through the Internet, much faster and more efficiently. More and more Estonians are making use of the opportunities offered by the public sector — the services of the revenue office, local governments and federal agencies — through the Internet. Having now connected all Estonian public schools to the Internet, the Government also plans to bring all public libraries online. This last summer, the Estonian State Chancellery launched a unique new project by opening a direct democracy portal called "Today I Decide". This portal allows everyone to present ideas, initiatives and proposals, as well as to comment upon proposed legislation. New ideas that have been proposed by portal users are passed on to the appropriate government offices and agencies for action. Many of you may be interested in finding out more about the initiatives I have described, and we are more than happy to share our experiences with you.

Finally, I would like to stress the fact that the grave events that have affected all of us in the last few months will not prevent us from moving ahead. Our decisiveness and sense of unity have only been reinforced by what has happened. We must not discard or forget all the common projects initiated before 11 September. In many parts of the world, nothing has changed for those who suffer from poverty, hunger and persecution. Thinking about our projects for the future, I am especially pleased that the United Nations special session on children, which was postponed owing to the terrorist attacks, will nevertheless take place in May next year. The goal of this upcoming special session, to create better conditions and opportunities for children everywhere, continues to be of the utmost importance to us. It is precisely for initiatives of this kind, which endeavour to achieve a better future for mankind, that the United Nations Organization has earned the Nobel Peace Prize.

In conclusion, please allow me to express my personal condolences and the condolences of all Estonians to the families of those who perished in the air tragedy that occurred just a few days ago in the borough of Queens.

The President: I call on Mr. Peter Chkheidze, Chairman of the delegation of Georgia.

Mr. Chkheidze (Georgia): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the demanding job of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. It is a fitting recognition of Korea's role in the international community and of your extensive experience and able leadership.

I would also like to extend our congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan and the United Nations for the much deserved award of the Nobel Peace Prize. It should serve as an added source of inspiration for him in his second term as Secretary-General and for all of us here.

The fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly runs parallel to dramatic events for the development of mankind. On behalf of the Government and the people of Georgia, I wish once again to express my sincere condolences and compassion to the American people for the tragic events of 11 September.

Ominous threats we had been talking about for so long have become real. Georgia, a country that over the past decade has suffered terribly from different manifestations of terrorism, is an active participant in the campaign against terror. The time is ripe for increased cooperation from all States and peoples of good will in this fight against terror.

I am referring not only to cooperation in the military field. Overcoming this evil requires close cooperation in development, the protection of human rights, eradicating poverty and in many other fields. Today's realities are a lesson to mankind on the consequences and cost of indifference and a lack of attention to what is happening all around the world.

The United Nations is certainly a unique Organization, where we, the Member States, can shape common strategies to combat many of the ills and problems of the day. These strategies and action plans are worked into various United Nations resolutions, decisions and declarations.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration is a great achievement in this regard. It is virtually a pledge on the part of nations to a common fight against the manifold challenges we face today. Without any further delay, Georgia, its people and all the peoples of the world need a clear demonstration of readiness to implement the commitments made in the Declaration. We are hopeful that the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326), will become a guide for Governments around the world.

Strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in the area of conflict settlement is crucial to the creation of a new world order based on common values and principles. The world order of the twenty-first century is clearly incompatible with the widespread violations of human rights, and this could lead to a destabilization of the international system.

The reforms should also encompass United Nations peacekeeping operations. Georgia supports the measures to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations preventive mechanisms. In the same context, the early deployment of peacekeeping contingents should be more coherent and systematic in order to quell conflicts in their early stages. The launching of a peacekeeping operation or a change in its mandate requires the consent of all sides involved. We are inclined to think that this approach requires revision. The cause of peace should rank as a higher priority for the United Nations than the consent of any side involved in the conflict.

In the words of the Secretary-General,

> "the international community must remain prepared to engage politically, and if necessary militarily, to contain menace and ultimately resolve conflicts that have got out of hand. This will require a better functioning of the collective security system than exists at the moment. It will require, above all, a greater willingness to intervene to prevent gross violations of human rights."

Internal conflicts spawned by separatism are no less dangerous to international security than the confrontations of the cold-war period or conflicts of international character. The reformed United Nations must be more concrete and decisive in terms of employing the compulsory measures provided for in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Georgia fully shares the view that there is a need to improve the United Nations rapid response system. We support the timely creation of a United Nations rapid deployment force, whose utilization in the early stage of peacekeeping operations would contribute to the prevention of many conflicts.

I would like in particular to note the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other structures under the United Nations umbrella in Georgia. Their assistance is many-faceted, and these structures in particular are making a great contribution to the process of Georgia's democratic transformation. However, a new agenda for cooperation is also required.

I wish to underscore the joint initiative of the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund with regard to creating a programme for the eradication of poverty. Georgia is one of the most active participants in this programme. An interesting part of its effort is the elaboration of a programme of employing internally displaced persons in small businesses. All of these processes are taking place under very difficult conditions and in an environment of numerous problems.

Over the past two years the perspectives of rapid development in Georgia have been countered by the

absence of progress in the peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia. It is time to put an end to the spiritual and physical suffering of the people of Georgian, Abkhaz and other nationalities who have been forced from their homes and lands by the tragedy of war. Most importantly, we cannot instil hatred and enmity in the coming generations. The value of peace in the region is too high to be sacrificed to the political and commercial ambitions of a single group.

The time has come to react duly to the ethnic cleansing carried out in Abkhazia, Georgia. The separatists, with the help of outside forces, expelled about 300,000 people from their places of residence. The inalienable right of people to live in their homeland is still being flagrantly trampled.

On numerous occasions Georgia has expressed its deep concern about the presence of uncontrolled regions within the territories of the sovereign State, ruled by de facto separatist regimes. The encouragement of these regimes is totally unacceptable and fraught with dangerous consequences. The tragic downing of a United Nations helicopter over Abkhazia, Georgia, is one such heartbreaking example. I wish to take this opportunity to once again express our deep condolences to the families of the victims, who paid the ultimate price for upholding the noble principles of the United Nations.

I would like to use this important rostrum to bring to the Assembly's attention the danger of large-scale provocation that Georgia is facing today. I am referring to the violation of Georgia's airspace and the bombing of our territory. Such attacks have taken place before as well, but, despite our protests, no adequate reaction was forthcoming. Georgia views these acts as an infringement of our sovereignty and an attempt by some forces to subvert the peace process.

All of this is taking place at a time when the United States, together with the international community, is mobilized against the most evil enemy of humankind: international terrorism. Georgia clearly visualizes its place in this fight, and President Shevardnadze has repeatedly expressed readiness for cooperation. But it is unacceptable that some States use this noble cause of fighting terrorism as a disguise in order to reassert influence in the post-Soviet context.

The Government of Georgia reiterates its commitment to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia. We believe that the use of force runs contrary to our political interests, in particular the interests of our multi-ethnic population, including the Abkhazians. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Government of Georgia to dissuade those people who have lost their faith in a peaceful resolution of the conflict from using other means.

We are offering a special programme for resolving the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, to all our political partners, the Security Council and the European bodies. This programme has to be implemented without delay, notwithstanding changes it may undergo or substantial concessions it may require from the parties involved in order to reach agreement and to put the programme into action.

For two years the document on the distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, drafted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has been kept within the confines of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia. This document has to constitute the basis for meaningful negotiations on the scope of autonomy for Abkhazia.

The Government of Georgia is ready to grant Abkhazia the widest form of autonomy practised around the world today. Considerable international support is needed to restore confidence between the parties, as indicated in the Declaration of the Yalta meeting that took place with the assistance of brotherly Ukraine.

Let me stress again that we attach great importance, and we are anxious to begin discussing, the economic rehabilitation strategy for the region. We also look forward to carrying out projects beneficial to all and to preserving the unique Abkhaz people.

We need working relations with Russia that are both cordial and at the same time equitable. Russia is a country with which we have cultural and friendly ties that are centuries old. We can only value its special role as the regional leader, member of the international anti-terrorist coalition, permanent member of the Security Council and the facilitator of the peace process in Abkhazia, Georgia. We expect that all this will be utilized in the best interests of all the people of Georgia. The continuation of misunderstanding and confrontation is unacceptable.

We must exert every effort to put an end to the use of separatist regimes by certain countries as a way of exerting pressure on neighbouring nations.

We support the dialogue among civilizations as a means of achieving better understanding between all the peoples of the world. We would be honoured to host a forum dedicated to this issue. As a country on the crossroads between Europe and Asia, Georgia, with its ancient and multifaceted culture, is an appropriate place for such a meeting.

In closing, let me stress again that it is dialogue and cooperation that should determine the fate of mankind. For that purpose we need a United Nations with broad, coherent and determined capabilities.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate. Before making my own concluding remarks, I shall call on those representatives who wish to speak in the exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind Members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Itoki (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): This morning the General Assembly heard a new and regrettable tirade by the representative of the bloody Government in place in Kigali. In fact, what needs to be known is that under the presidency of self-proclaimed President Paul Kagame and his Akazu, Rwanda has become an aggressive, terrorist and hoodlum State. At a time when there are promising prospects for a return to lasting peace in the entire Great Lakes region — in particular with the conclusion of the second phase of the disengagement and redeployment of forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — and when the Security Council has just endorsed the start of phase III of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) according to the concept of operations set out by the Secretary-General, the faction in power in Rwanda continues to distinguish itself by its retrograde and barbaric attitude.

Rwanda remains the only country that has not begun any sort of withdrawal of its forces. Namibia has completely withdrawn its forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Angola has already withdrawn 80 per cent of its forces. Uganda and Zimbabwe have begun the process of gradually withdrawing some of their units. On the other hand, and in defiance of the international community, Rwanda has considerably strengthened its presence in the provinces of Kivu and Maniema in order to continue to pursue a policy of terror against the Congolese civilian population in those provinces under occupation.

I would like to inform the Assembly that two days ago in the province of East Kasai, the occupation forces opened fire indiscriminately against the population in a military barrage that killed and wounded numerous students, teachers and innocent bystanders.

Rwanda continues to try to hoodwink the international community under the guise of so-called security concerns arising from the activities of Rwandan citizens who are either part of the former regular army or members of the Interahamwe militia, whose memory evokes such sadness.

We should point out the real reason for the various invasions carried out by Rwanda during more than four years. All those invasions resulted in senseless large-scale massacres of men, women and children. We can no longer count the number of extrajudicial killings, summary executions, instances of deportation of entire populations, hostage-taking, systematic rape, the burying alive of women, grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the criminal and deliberate spread of HIV/AIDS. I shall stop there.

Horror has become a familiar feeling for the people of my country because of the will of the single man I mentioned and his Akazu. Mr. Paul Kagame is the only obstacle to the return of peace to the Great Lakes region. We dare to repeat that the hatred this man has for most of his own fellow citizens does not permit him to see that it has long been high time to establish and strengthen peace, justice and democracy in our region, for the benefit of our peoples.

The representative of the bloody Government in Kigali had the audacity to insult the intelligence of members of the General Assembly by asking the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take part in an undertaking to murder Congolese citizens by participating in the joint special force of the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie-Mouvement de Libération de Congo (RCD-MLC),

which has set itself the task of tracking and crushing all opposition to the occupation.

I wish to recall for the benefit of the representative of Rwanda the provisions of Security Council resolution 1376 (2001) of 9 November 2001. Paragraph 11 of that resolution condemned the establishment of that joint special force in Kindu and stressed that the disarmament of that Congolese city should take place on a voluntary basis and in a neutral environment. Paragraph 12 (iv) of the resolution called on Rwanda in particular to create the appropriate conditions to facilitate the voluntary disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of the armed groups concerned by assuring the protection of the personal safety of the members of those groups, their civil rights and their economic reintegration, including with the assistance of the donor community. One could not be clearer than that.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask the representative of Rwanda to faithfully convey to his masters my demand that the city of Kisangani immediately be demilitarized in accordance with all the relevant Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and that the Rwandan mercenaries we know as the Rwandan Patriotic Front be unconditionally withdrawn. Let those evil individuals exercise their patriotism in their own country.

The truth is that Rwanda is in Congo for purely economic reasons. In order to achieve its aims, Rwanda is currently trying to carry out an *anschluss* of the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Indeed, the Rwandan authorities envision a possible annexation of the eastern territories of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a way of enabling Rwanda to keep part of its population outside Rwanda proper while at the same time asserting the supremacy of one ethnic group over all the other tribes of the region. As we have denounced unceasingly here at the United Nations, the objective of the Rwandan authorities is the dismemberment of Africa in order to establish monoethnic micro-States, gain economic and ethnic dominance and control major commodity resources along a swath running from the northern mining province of Katanga, south of Sudan, and passing through the forests of the province of Maniema, the Ruzizi Valley, in the province of South Kivu, North Kivu and the Eastern Province. Those areas contain great quantities of natural resources and such strategic minerals as gold, diamonds, oil and niobium and coltan.

It must be well understood that our entire population has suffered far too much from this senseless and useless war. Our entire population aspires to a peace that will make it possible for it to renew the relations of friendship, confidence and peaceful coexistence it previously enjoyed.

The United Nations and Africa, through the Lusaka Agreement, offer a possible way out of this war of aggression. We must succeed on the political track, through the inter-Congolese dialogue, as well as on the military track, through the programme of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement and the orderly withdrawal of all foreign forces. All the belligerent parties, with the obvious exception of Rwanda, are committed to the path of peace. The community of nations would do well to help Rwanda, perhaps by peaceful means, perhaps through the application of appropriate sanctions, to get more involved in the process, so that all together, hand in hand, we can restore peace in our long-suffering region and create propitious conditions to enable present and future generations to flourish.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): Ethiopia has only one strategic enemy. Eritrea is not that enemy; the enemy I am referring to is poverty and backwardness. We therefore want to use all our resources, both human and material, to fight poverty. However, we cannot do so if we have a neighbour whose leadership is unable — as it has been to date — to move from being just a guerrilla movement to building a State, with all the responsibilities that that involves. The leadership in Eritrea, which is mired in a serious internal crisis, is resorting once again to actions that may lead us to unnecessary conflict. It wants to cover up its internal problems by externalizing them. But as far as Ethiopia is concerned, we are determined not to give them that chance.

The Foreign Minister of the Eritrean Government said earlier that Ethiopia had failed to comply with the Algiers peace Agreement between the two countries. I should like to make just one or two points concerning the Algiers Agreement, which brought about the ceasefire in that unnecessary conflict. Last March, Ethiopia signed what is referred to as a status-of-forces agreement with the United Nations. As I speak, Eritrea

has still not done likewise. Ethiopia has allowed free movement for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), but Eritrea has not. The most recent UNMEE statement confirms that fact.

They talk about prisoners of war; it was only last week that, through the International Committee of the Red Cross, scores of Eritrean prisoners of war were released. They talk about the temporary security zone; although it has been established, it is not functional, and they put the blame on Ethiopia. There is a saying in some parts of Ethiopia that the mother gets the blame for the father's actions. I am not, of course, trying to say that we are the mother — that is just a saying. But in our societies, women and mothers are always blamed for the faults of men and husbands.

The Agreement has not been functional, as it should have been, because, under its terms, Eritrea was allowed to have a reasonable number of police and militia. The militia, by the way, are groups of peasants and farmers who are armed in order simply to protect their villages; they are not supposed to be armed to the teeth with mechanized vehicles and all sorts of heavy weapons. Hence, Ethiopia has said — we informed the Security Council today — that regular forces numbering in the thousands are in the temporary security zone, which was established under the Agreement to separate the forces. Today our two forces are not separated. We are face to face along several areas of the front, so I do not understand how we can still call it a temporary security zone. It is not functional, as it should be, because the other side, which has been allowed to maintain its police force and militia, have used that pretext to bring in regular forces.

I would like to provide another example. The unfortunate policies of the leadership of that State have continued to put the people of that country and the region in a very dangerous situation by continuing to arm and to conscript people, whereas, to date, on our side, we have demobilized over 64,000 troops. We have not, in fact, heard about or seen anything from the other side. All we know is that they are increasing their forces, so that almost 10 per cent of their population of 3.5 million is now under arms. What is the purpose of that? It is certainly not a group of armed men going on a picnic.

The Foreign Minister talked about a direct air route between Addis Ababa and Asmara being sabotaged or subvented by Ethiopia's refusal to put it into operation. At one time we proposed — and the United Nations accepted — the idea of providing alternatives to the route that was initially suggested. That route was the one used by our airlines when the two countries were one, and it passed over heavily populated towns. One of those towns, Mekelle, was bombed in the early part of the conflict in 1998, and more than 50 schoolchildren were killed. That is why we do not want that direct route to be used. We suggested — and the United Nations accepted — the idea of changing the flight path to anywhere east or west of the original route. At one time the United Nations came up with a detour that would have added less than two minutes; it was rejected by the other side. So we are saying, here in the Assembly, that Ethiopia will accept all routes except one, whereas they are saying that they will reject all routes except one. I leave that issue to the judgement of the Assembly.

Another issue that was mentioned was the question of Ethiopia's having failed to submit operationally useful information on minefields. We were actually the first to submit the information on minefields. We submitted all that we have. What more could be asked of someone who says, "We do not have any more information"? We cannot give something that we do not have. The United Nations has accepted that, for its own good reasons. Of course, for propaganda purposes, the other party to this unfortunate conflict wants to go after it. But there is no more minefield information that we have or can submit, and the United Nations has accepted that.

Finally, I just want to say that the war was imposed on us. Of course, they denied that, until the Organization of African Unity organized a fact-finding mission and the former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, in a report to Congress, stated who started it. But more devastatingly, their own former Defence Minister last week confirmed that it was by order of their President that Ethiopia was invaded.

So I would say that Ethiopia, like before, wants peace in order to concentrate on alleviating poverty. We were doing precisely that before we were invaded and during the conflict and have done so since its end. In fact, as one example, this year alone we registered 8.5 per cent growth in our gross domestic product. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund figure for that same period is 8 per cent.

We desire to continue along this route. It is Ethiopia's hope that we will be allowed to do so and that the other party — in this case, the Eritrean leadership — will heed our advice that we concentrate on working to alleviate the poverty that in fact marks both countries, and that we work for our peoples and on the peace process and not pay mere lip service to it.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I am taking the floor in exercise of my right of reply to the statement delivered on 12 November 2001 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. İsmail Cem, who, regrettably, did not hesitate to engage once more in the well-known rhetoric, replete with threats and misrepresentations, concerning the situation in Cyprus. Mr. Cem expressed the well-known exceptions to the accession of Cyprus to the European Union, referred to the so-called realities on the island and misrepresented the position of President Clerides with regard to the proposal made by the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, for face-to-face negotiations.

Let me make a few things clear. First, the accession of Cyprus to the European Union is a process that involves the European Union and the Republic of Cyprus. I remind Mr. Cem that the European Union has clearly established that no third party has a right to veto Cyprus' accession, which will be based on the merits of its case. The European Commission, the European Union member States and the United Nations Security Council have made it abundantly clear that there is no legal obstacle to the membership of Cyprus to the European Union. Membership does not constitute union with another State and thus does not violate the provisions of the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, as claimed by Turkey.

Secondly, the so-called realities are those stemming from a clear violation of international law by the Republic of Turkey with its invasion, subsequent occupation and policy of ethnic cleansing inflicted on the Greek Cypriot population, along with an array of human rights violations that have been clearly documented and led the European Court of Human Rights to issue its landmark decision of 10 May 2001 in the case of *Cyprus v. Turkey*, finding Turkey in violation of articles 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights and articles 1 and 2 of its Protocol No. 1. The so-called realities of which Mr. Cem speaks are nothing more than the faits accomplis created by Turkey in Cyprus through the use of force and based on the forceful separation of the two communities of the island in pursuit of secessionist aims.

Thirdly, with regard to the letters exchanged between President Clerides and Mr. Denktash, I wish to inform the Assembly that President Clerides responded immediately, on 8 November 2001, explaining that a tête-à-tête meeting in Nicosia would be a good idea immediately after the acceptance by both sides of the United Nations Secretary-General's invitation to talks. Let me recall that, on 5 September, Mr. Denktash refused the invitation of the Secretary-General to resume the process which he had abandoned a year earlier. The Security Council expressed its disappointment on 26 September this year at the unjustified rejection of the invitation by the Turkish side. President Clerides wrote to Mr. Denktash that they should not be abandoning the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General and the process in which he and his Special Representative are involved. Following a response from Mr. Denktash on 12 November, in which he indicated that his aim was not to abandon the mission of good offices, President Clerides expressed his readiness to have direct talks in the presence of the representative of the Secretary-General in order to keep the Secretary-General informed of what is being discussed and what progress is being made, so that the Secretary-General would in turn report to the Security Council. We are not yet aware of any response from Mr. Denktash, but we express the hope that he will now display the necessary political will and seriously engage in negotiations in good faith to find a just and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem within the parameters set by the Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): I shall respect the dignity of the General Assembly by refraining from the purple language employed by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia. I also have no intention of engaging in issues that are not germane to the statement of the Foreign Minister of Eritrea. I am not here on a propaganda campaign and I shall be brief and focus on only two or three issues, if only because I addressed yesterday, in another exercise of the right of reply, most of the issues raised by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia. Also, I shall not engage in a discussion of the internal problems of a country, if only because this is in the public domain. The newspapers and the web sites will tell you what has been going on in Ethiopia over the last six or seven months. One should take the mote out

of one's eye before talking about the chaff in someone else's.

We heard that the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) has been happy with the information given to it by Ethiopia with respect to landmines. Now I shall read what the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said in regard to that when asked about it in one of his interviews:

> "We are pressuring everybody to give us landmine information. Eritrea has given us records for mines. Ethiopia has given us several hundred maps. We have never hidden the fact that we have been persuading Ethiopia to continue to cooperate with us in order that we can get all the records, all the maps, all the information they have so we know where these mines are, so people can live there safely."

Now the Ethiopian Government does not want to give the necessary information on landmines for a simple reason: it does not want the people who have been displaced by this aggression to go back to their villages and their farms.

The issues of the police and militia and of demobilization were also handled by my delegation yesterday. The second issue concerns the direct air route between Addis Ababa and Asmara that had been requested by UNMEE. UNMEE proposed an air route. We accepted it; Ethiopia rejected it. Ethiopia claims that it has offered alternative routes.

First, contrary to what had been asserted, these alternative routes are not deviations of an insignificant quantity. They are deviations of 10 to 15 minutes, and 8 minutes in one direction. This information was given to the Security Council by the Eritrean delegation this morning.

Secondly, what the Ethiopian Government is proposing are the routes that these planes had taken to attack the Port of Massawa, kill people, bomb the electricity supply and Asmara itself, using a route from which they hit civilian centres and the airport, where one of the pilots, Colonel Bezabeh Petros, was captured.

The President: Ethiopia has again requested to exercise the right of reply. I call on the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): We have already made our points. What we want is to fight poverty. We do not want to engage in polemics here. We do not want to dignify the other party by doing so. We would like to leave it to you and the Assembly here to judge.

The President: The general debate at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly has come to an end. Before closing it, I would like to make some concluding remarks.

The general debate of this session has been held in a most extraordinary setting, unprecedented in the history of the United Nations, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September. As I said in my opening remarks a week ago, in view of the seriousness of the circumstances, I think this general debate bears for all of us a special meaning and a heightened sense of responsibility. Thus I am particularly pleased and heartened to see a very successful conclusion to the debate.

We had the honour of hearing statements by a total of 188 speakers. Among them were 31 heads of State, 11 heads of Government, 9 Deputy Prime Ministers and 96 Foreign Ministers. I would like to extend my deep appreciation to all of them for honouring this Assembly by their participation as well as active and constructive contribution to the debate. I am also grateful for their cooperation in efficiently conducting the meetings under such unusual arrangements as the extended meeting hours and the limited time for statements.

The issues we have addressed during the last week were of great importance and urgency, particularly in light of the current international situation. Secretary-General Kofi Annan began by giving us an excellent outline of his priorities for the coming years, along with a review of the fundamental guiding principles of the United Nations.

Almost without exception, speakers during the general debate highlighted the need for concerted common action to combat terrorism. A majority welcomed the swift response of the United Nations to the 11 September terrorist attacks and expressed support for General Assembly resolution 56/1, as well as Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). A number of delegations also underscored their support for the current military campaign in Afghanistan. Many expressed the view that a broad-

based post-Taliban Government should be established, representing all the Afghan people.

Amid widespread emphasis on the need for effective multilateral cooperation to address the immediate threats posed by terrorism, the importance of directly linking the wider goals of the United Nations with the fight against terrorism was also recognized. In this regard, it has often been stressed that terrorism can be eliminated only if the conditions creating a fertile breeding ground for it, such as poverty and social and economic marginalization, are removed. Some speakers also pointed out that a lack of democracy and persistent violations of human rights could lead to the emergence of terrorist movements, while others saw a link between acts of terrorism and the lack of progress in resolving long-standing disputes, particularly with regard to the Middle East conflict. As for the role of the United Nations in counter-terrorist activities, several specific ideas have been presented, including one to establish a centre for coordinating assistance to States in resolving crises caused by terrorist acts.

The question of the definition of terrorism was also a major theme. There was general agreement that acts of terrorism could never be justified, regardless of the cause, motive or perpetrator. However, some delegations made the point that any definition must distinguish between acts of terrorism and acts in the exercise of the legitimate right to self-determination and defence against foreign occupation. In this regard, I would like to remind Member States that at the end of the plenary debate on measures to eliminate international terrorism in early October, I requested the Sixth Committee to expedite its work with a view to concluding the pending conventions on international terrorism. I would like to appeal once again to all those concerned to exercise flexibility and strengthen cooperation so that we do not lose the momentum created thus far.

The broad consensus on addressing terrorism went hand in hand with recognition of the need to deal in parallel with the many concerns that were on the United Nations agenda before the events of 11 September and that are often at the root of conflict and social disintegration. These include the fight against poverty, underdevelopment, inequality, disease, and other economic and social problems.

It was widely agreed that the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the heads of State and Government one year ago, provides a valuable blueprint for tackling global issues and that the international community needs to proceed expeditiously with its implementation. A number of delegations welcomed the Secretary-General's road map in particular as providing useful guidance in implementing the Declaration.

Many speakers drew attention to the role of the United Nations as a focal point of multilateralism, especially in the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September, and as a forum for cooperation in pursuing the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. Emphasis was placed on the central position of the General Assembly and the need for continuing reform of the Organization in order to enable it to deal successfully with both old and new challenges.

On the economic and social side, concern was expressed that the current global economic downturn made the achievement of the poverty reduction goal more difficult. In addition to a resumption of economic growth, meeting this objective would require the mobilization of new resources for economic and social development. The need to deal more effectively with globalization was highlighted, along with the importance of humanizing this trend, encompassing, inter alia, the United Nations role in international cooperation in response to globalization.

As the impact of the economic slowdown is felt most acutely by developing countries, especially the least developed counties, it is therefore even more urgent to address issues relevant to this problem. These include the continuing lack of full access to markets of developed countries for products from the developing countries, especially agricultural and textile, and other trade barriers; insufficient and declining volumes of official development assistance; unsatisfactory levels of foreign direct investment; and unsustainable debt levels.

Many speakers saw in the just-concluded ministerial meeting in Doha an opportunity to tackle imbalances in the international trade system. It is particularly noteworthy that the World Trade Organization member States agreed to name the new round of multilateral trade negotiations the Doha Development Round. I believe that the new trade round

will be able to provide powerful impetus to global economic growth.

Likewise, high expectations were expressed with regard to two conferences scheduled for 2002: the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Both are expected to provide strong support for implementing the goals of the Millennium Declaration.

The threat of HIV/AIDS was also a focus of concern. A number of delegations welcomed the achievements of the General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS of June 2001 and commended the Secretary-General for his initiative to establish a Global Fund for HIV/AIDS and other diseases. All relevant actors were called upon to contribute to this fund so as to support developing countries in their fight against the pandemic.

Concerning the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in an era of globalization, it was widely acknowledged that these technologies offer new opportunities for many developing countries, but that, at the same time, greater efforts are needed to deal with the digital divide. In this regard, the United Nations ICT Task Force should be a catalyst in harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies for development.

Several speakers welcomed the adoption, by the thirty-seventh summit of the Organization of African Unity, of the New Partnership for Africa's Development as an expression of leadership for Africa's development, and a number of countries pledged their support for its implementation.

The general debate has also witnessed renewed commitment to gender equality and the implementation of Beijing and Beijing+5, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Several delegations highlighted national action to ensure equality of opportunity for women and men, while others called for programmes and measures for the empowerment of women, including in the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Finally, let me remind the Assembly that my intention in these remarks was to offer a brief personal observation on the general debate, recognizing that a more thorough presentation would not be in keeping with my duties. I regret that it is not possible for me to reflect in these short remarks the rich ideas, profound insights and far-reaching vision that have been presented by some of the best minds of our world.

I would like to emphasize, therefore, that we share the responsibility to maintain and nurture the spirit of commitment and cooperation at the high political level that has been demonstrated in the general debate. We should direct our future work in the plenary and the Main Committees in such a way as to best reflect the concerns, hopes and aspirations expressed by all delegations over the past week. I trust that our collective commitment will ensure that this task is successfully completed.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the representatives of all Member States who have expressed support for my presidency, along with their kind words addressed to me and to my country.

Last but not least, I wish to thank once again, on behalf of the General Assembly, the United States Government and our host city, New York, for their hospitality and security arrangements during the general debate. My heartfelt thanks also go to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General Chen Jian and his able team, and all United Nations security personnel, as well as the entire staff of the Secretariat, for their untiring devotion and outstanding professionalism.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 9?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations A/56/PV.58

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

58th plenary meeting
Monday, 19 November 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 29

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/326)

Letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly (A/56/422)

The President: I should like to inform Members that, in a letter dated 13 November 2001 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of November, requests that the Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of Switzerland in the debate on agenda item 29, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit".

In view of the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly take a decision on that request. May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear a statement by the observer of Switzerland in the debate on agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

The President: Before inviting representatives to speak on the agenda item, I wish to draw attention briefly to its background.

As we all know, last year's historic Millennium Summit produced the Millennium Declaration, and as follow-up the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/162, which requested the Secretary-General, among others, to prepare a long-term "road map" towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The Secretary-General's road map is before us, in document A/56/356.

In this regard, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser, Mr. Michael Doyle, for preparing this comprehensive report in good time for our consideration. I believe that the road map provides us with not only a useful survey of ongoing activities of the United Nations, but also a solid foundation and benchmark on which we can proceed with the implementation of the Millennium Declaration in the coming years.

As this session of the General Assembly is the first after the Millennium Assembly of last year, the task before us requires our renewed sense of responsibility, particularly in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. We need to maintain the political will and momentum of the Millennium Summit and to take a comprehensive and balanced approach in carrying out and following up the Declaration.

The Millennium Declaration has set out the future direction for the United Nations in the new era. It covers the whole spectrum of areas where our Organization is playing a role for the sake of the peace and prosperity of mankind. Thus, its implementation

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can be effective only through participation by and cooperation among all actors in international relations, including States, the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, international organizations, regional organizations and civil society.

In this sense, I would like to remind representatives of the great expectations for our debate today held by many observers all over the world, as well as by ourselves within the United Nations.

On that note, I now wish to invite the speakers on the list to take the floor.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Millennium Summit has confirmed the confidence of the international community that the United Nations and its Charter continue to serve as a solid basis for the formation of a stable and prosperous world.

We welcome the Secretary-General's plan to implement the Millennium Declaration, aimed at strengthening the United Nations as a central mechanism for collective regulation of international relations in the context of globalization. We consider it important that it reflects the understanding of the need for a comprehensive strategy for the international community to solve the urgent problems of the present day. We support the draft resolution prepared by the President of the General Assembly, which establishes a mechanism to review efforts to implement the outcomes of the Millennium forums.

The Secretary-General was right to emphasize issues pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security. Their effective solution, with the United Nations in the leading role, is becoming a prerequisite for sustained and balanced development of the international system in the interests of all States.

Without neutralizing common threats in the field of security and without ensuring strategic stability in its broad sense, it is impossible to create conditions favourable for solving other equally urgent problems in the areas of dynamic and non-discriminatory social and economic development, poverty eradication and the protection of human rights and the environment.

Today, it is obvious to everyone that terrorism and the political and religious extremism that feeds it are the worst enemies of the international community. Russia has consistently supported active efforts to counteract any manifestation of terrorism and extremism at the national, regional and global levels. We are doing everything necessary, including in Russia itself, to fully implement the anti-terrorist resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, including in particular Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1377 (2001), which have provided broad opportunities to mobilize the efforts of the international community to address this threat.

A powerful trend towards united efforts to counteract terrorism has been shown in the activities of the international anti-terrorist coalition. Russia is one of its responsible participants. The fact that the coalition was created with the United Nations playing a consolidating and coordination role based on a solid foundation of international law is of fundamental importance.

The joint fight against terrorism has begun to yield its first results, for example in Afghanistan. It is important that together we consolidate the success of the military counter-terrorism operation by accelerating the process of reaching a political settlement of the Afghan conflict under United Nations auspices. That was the aim of the recent Security Council resolution 1378 (2001), which was adopted unanimously.

The social, economic and humanitarian tasks facing the United Nations also require joint efforts by Member States and by other actors in international relations, including the private sector and representatives of civil society. Much remains to be done to eradicate poverty and to promote economic growth and sustainable development. Russia is firmly committed to the noble goal of eliminating poverty from the world. To the extent possible, we are making a tangible, practical contribution to accomplishing this, including through a significant write-off of debt owed by the world's poorest countries.

Russia intends to continue to take practical steps to support the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS and other dangerous infectious diseases, for example through support for the global HIV/AIDS and health fund that has been set up.

On the basis of the broadest possible cooperation within the United Nations, Russia will continue actively to implement the decisions of the Millennium Summit so that they can be of genuine benefit to the international community.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive road map provided in his report (A/56/326) on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. That report provides a satisfactory analysis of the state of play on the various goals which were agreed upon a year ago and outlines a large number and a wide variety of further steps which we can take. The Secretary-General can do no more. The Millennium Declaration can be implemented only by Member States.

The Millennium Declaration acknowledges the collective responsibility of the international community and identifies key objectives in six broad areas. Of special significance to the majority of members of the General Assembly are those which are now known as the millennium development goals. These are not new targets set by the Millennium Summit. They are targets which derive from the global conferences of the 1990s. The Summit provided an opportunity, which together we chose to seize, to reaffirm our shared commitment to the achievement of those goals.

We agree with the Secretary-General that what is needed now is not any further elaboration of plans of action. That has already been done by the global conferences. The requirement now, as has been pointed out, is to move from an era of commitment to an era of implementation. This, however, cannot happen, and none of the Millennium development goals can be achieved, unless significant additional resources are made available. The Secretary-General has noted that there is a special obligation on more fortunate countries and that wealthier nations must adhere to their promises. He says that

> "Those that fail to honour these commitments must realize that they are failing also in the responsibility, which they have solemnly recognized, 'to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level'." (*A/56/326, para. 10*)

We would add that those who fail to honour their commitments must realize that they also fail to honour multilateralism, that they detract from its legitimacy and that they erode the faith which developing countries have placed in it.

It helps to speak with numbers. The overarching millennium development goal is to halve the proportion of people living in absolute poverty by 2015. The *Rural Poverty Report 2001* of the International Fund for Agricultural Development finds that the goal will not be met. The attainment of that goal requires that 30 million people must escape extreme poverty every year. However, only 10 million are able to do so. This is a finding which pre-dates the terrorist attacks of 11 September. Those attacks, the World Bank projects, will lead to pulling 10 million people below the absolute poverty line of $1 a day. In other words, not only is movement towards the overarching millennium development goal unsatisfactory, but there is, in fact, no movement at all.

The Millennium Declaration calls upon industrialized countries to grant more generous development assistance. That has not been done. The road map, strangely, recommends as a strategy the consideration of steps for making aid programmes more efficient. That is odd. The way forward has been clearly identified by the High-level Panel on Financing for Development — the Zedillo Panel. It has been translated into the figure of an additional amount of $50 billion every year. The only strategy that is now required is to make the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development a success. Success would mean the Conference agreeing upon specific measures which would ensure the availability of stable and predictable financing for development and for poverty eradication. Success would contribute to the achievement of a wide range of other goals as well, from those which relate to reducing the effects of natural disasters to those which deal with peace and security. As we have often said, it is endemic poverty and lack of economic development that constitute the most important factors fuelling conflict. With nearly half the world's population living on less than $2 a day, we do not have the setting either for social and political stability or for harmony.

One of the development goals in which success, albeit very limited, has been achieved is that which relates to encouraging the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available and more affordable by all who need them in developing countries. Manufacturers of HIV-related medicines have, as we are aware, agreed to reduce the cost of such medicines by 85 per cent to 90 per cent in some countries. India can rightfully claim credit for that achievement. The United Nations had been discussing this issue with the world's leading pharmaceutical companies for a number of years. That, however, did not yield any result. It was not until generic

manufacturers from India placed themselves on the front pages of newspapers all over the world and offered the chance of saving millions of lives that the multinationals decided to forsake some of their profits. We are happy that the ministerial declaration of the World Trade Organization on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and public health, which was issued on 14 November, has firmly placed public health before patents. Public health problems have also been broadened to include those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics. The success which has been achieved clearly shows that the strategy we must adopt for moving forward cannot be based on any expectation of altruism on the part of multinational corporations. It can be based only on the assertion of the right to affordable essential medicines.

We have set ourselves the goal of ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, including information and communication technologies (ICT), are available to all. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on the establishment of the ICT Task Force, which will be holding its inaugural session tomorrow, 20 November. The Indian experience is confirmation of the role that ICT can play in promoting development. The information technology industry in India has registered a compounded annual growth rate of more than 42 per cent over the last five years. Its contribution to our global exports is 14 per cent; that is projected to rise to 35 per cent by 2008. We wholeheartedly endorse the strategy which has been outlined for moving forward through support for human resource development and institutional capacity-building. India will be a willing partner in that exercise.

The Millennium Declaration had identified "Meeting the special needs of Africa" as one of the key areas requiring our collective commitment. We support the strategies which have been identified in the road map prepared by the Secretary-General. It is our firm conviction, however, that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Africa knows its problems better than anybody else. It also knows the solutions, which it has articulated clearly over the years, most recently in the New African Initiative, now renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Our strategy for moving forward cannot be a donor-dictated package. What Africa requires, and what is incumbent on the international community in implementation of the Millennium Declaration, is to support Africa in the solutions which it has identified for itself.

In the Millennium Declaration we had resolved to take concerted action against international terrorism. The terrible events of 11 September have brought home to us the need for urgency in this action. They have also brought home the realization that terrorism is truly an international phenomenon and that it can be tackled only collectively. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) provides a framework for collective and individual action. The strategy for moving forward should involve the full implementation of the permanent obligations which it lays down for all Member States. The early adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism would also be a step towards the fulfilment of our pledge in the Millennium Declaration.

We had also committed ourselves to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim. This, in our view, has to remain our foremost priority. Our strategies need to be non-discriminatory and transparent, and our approach truly multilateral and inclusive, if we are to emerge from the shadows of vulnerability and fear into the light of confidence and hope.

As an initial step, we had resolved in the Millennium Declaration to consider the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger. India, as a responsible nuclear-weapon State, brought before the First Committee two weeks ago — as it has over the last four sessions of the General Assembly — a draft resolution on this subject, setting out the strategy for moving forward.

We had also resolved to take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference held last July fell short of our expectations. It needs, however, to be implemented expeditiously and fully as a first step in a multilateral process. The strategy for moving forward would be to build consensus on the issues which remain outstanding, particularly the supply of weapons to non-State actors.

Peacekeeping has emerged as one of the most important and visible areas of work of the United Nations. We had therefore resolved a year ago to give the United Nations the resources and tools which it

needs for the effective discharge of this function. This has been done. In addition, we also agreed in the Millennium Declaration to consider expeditiously the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. We did so because we knew that the endemic problems which plague United Nations peacekeeping cannot be resolved through the mere infusion of additional resources. India's experience of almost five decades in 35 of the 54 United Nations peacekeeping operations has led us to the conclusion that the lessons of Somalia and Sierra Leone have to be learned if peacekeeping is to be reformed. A principal lesson is that a genuine and meaningful partnership between the Security Council, the troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat is essential. We have, in the appropriate forum, elaborated on how this partnership should be developed and on the mechanism through which it can be implemented.

We resolved, at the Millennium Summit, to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. We know that, even as the Open-ended Working Group completes eight years of work, there is a need to persevere and not to be disillusioned by the slow progress which has been made so far. We need to bear in mind, though, that the legitimacy and the credibility of the decisions of the Security Council have been, and will be, questioned if it is not made more representative of the wider membership.

In the brief time that is allotted to each delegation, it is possible to touch on only some of the issues which need to be raised in this debate. The issues which I have highlighted today are, in our view, among those which merit the most urgent consideration by the Assembly. I must add, however, that India will participate constructively in the implementation of all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to convey my thanks to the Secretariat for the high quality of the documents that are before us today as we consider the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

However, my delegation is surprised that neither the Secretary-General nor any representative of his are present to submit these very important documents or to hear our comments. I hope that during the course of the day the Secretary-General will do us the courtesy of being represented in this Hall.

The report of the Secretary-General, like the recommendations of the High-Level Policy Network on Youth Employment, is for us a very valuable source of information and of ideas about what should be done to maintain the spirit that prevailed at the Millennium Summit and to give substance to the decisions emanating from that meeting.

What emerges right away from the report of the Secretary-General and which so felicitously coincides with the spirit and the letter of resolution 55/162 is the need to adopt an integrated, coordinated, global and balanced approach and to make use of the existing structures and machinery for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

We therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue to provide coordination at the level of the United Nations system to help to implement the Declaration and to find, within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, innovative means of strengthening cooperation and coordination throughout the United Nations system as a whole.

My delegation would like to reaffirm once again its particular interest in a periodic evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. This exercise, which, pursuant to resolution 55/162, is to be undertaken on an annual and quinquennial basis, will make it possible not only to evaluate the results achieved but also to take note of any lacunae in the implementation of the Declaration and to define strategies for remedying them.

The road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration contained in the report of the Secretary-General, which describes the current situation and gives strategic guidelines and reference points for the implementation of the Declaration, seems to be in keeping with our own view of the matters in that it clearly and specifically indicates the approaches that need to be taken in order to achieve the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration.

The road map proposes a strategy to be followed at the national, regional and international levels in order to achieve the goals laid down in the Millennium Declaration in a number of fields: peace, security and disarmament; development and poverty eradication; protection of the environment; human rights; protection

of vulnerable groups; the special needs of Africa; and the strengthening of the United Nations system.

A report as detailed as that of the Secretary-General's road map document obviously requires more thorough study and consultations in the regional groups to examine, among other things, the draft resolution prepared by the President of the General Assembly, of which we obtained a copy only on Friday, 16 November, through the co-Chairs of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77.

On Wednesday, 21 November, the Joint Coordinating Committee will hold consultations to study the draft resolution that you, Mr. President, kindly submitted to us. The convening of consultations is even more timely and necessary because, due to the hazards of the scheduling of agenda items and the disruption that has occurred in the organizing of our work, the debate of this agenda item comes immediately following a general debate that has taken all our energies. Therefore, my delegation will for the moment confine itself to making a few brief remarks and observations on three aspects of the road map document.

First, concerning goal 8 of the road map document's annex, on developing a global partnership for development, my delegation welcomes the use of result indicators but considers that the emphasis should be placed on how the results of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, will be integrated into the overall strategy. The Monterrey Conference should address important issues such as removing obstacles to the mobilization of the financial resources necessary for development programmes in developing countries, increasing official development assistance and an effective, global treatment of the debt problem in low-income and middle-income countries. The Conference also provides an opportunity for the international community to translate into action the commitments for development and poverty eradication made in the Millennium Declaration.

In this regard, it should be recalled that the General Assembly stresses, in operative paragraph 4 of resolution 55/162, the need to

> "use ... upcoming events and special sessions of the General Assembly, as well as related conferences and events, to the maximum extent possible in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and requests the President of the General Assembly to follow up these processes".

Concerning the specific needs of Africa, my delegation would like to draw attention to the need, when the time comes, to integrate into the strategy proposed in the road map document the mechanisms that will replace the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa once the final consideration scheduled for September 2002 is completed.

With regard to the goal of the Millennium Declaration

> "To reaffirm the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, and to enable it to play that role effectively", (*resolution 55/2, para. 30*)

my delegation has always advocated the full exercise of the Assembly's prerogatives and can only regret that the strategy proposed in the road map document has restricted the actions to be taken in this regard to a simple rationalization of the Assembly's working methods. We believe that priority should be given to strengthening the General Assembly's role and its relations with the other principal organs of the Organization, particularly the Security Council.

My delegation also welcomes the Secretary-General's praiseworthy initiative of launching, in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, a Youth Employment Network. When the heads of State and Government decided in the Millennium Declaration "to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work" (*ibid., para. 20*), they were conscious of the devastation that unemployment and underemployment cause for young people, their families and their communities. Beyond the economic problems, the waste of human capital and the social exclusion it causes, unemployment also feeds the sense of frustration and despair among young people, sometimes to the extent that they succumb to crime, prostitution and violence.

In this context, we welcome the quality of the work by the 12 members of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network. The Panel's report contains recommendations and guidelines that in our

view can contribute to the implementation of a new international partnership for full employment for young people. The originality of those recommendations of the High-level Panel must be stressed. They are based on a new approach that treats the influx of young people into labour markets as an asset with enormous potential for economic and social development, rather than as a problem or curse.

In conclusion, my delegation would like stress the attention we plan on giving to these two important reports, and in general, to the question of the follow-up of the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Beyond the symbolism of the Millennium Summit in marking our passage into the third millennium, that September 2000 event was a major turning point in the United Nations chapter of the history of humankind. In perfect harmony, our heads of State and Government played the score of universalism, stressing the cardinal values and principles that must now underpin international relations: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and the sharing of responsibilities.

Rooted in sublime values and noble principles, the Millennium Declaration stated the strategic goals that we intend to make our own in this globalized, complex and interdependent world that is both united and divided: peace, security and disarmament; development, the environment and poverty eradication; human rights, democracy and good governance; the fight against racism and xenophobia; the equality of the sexes, the rights of the child and the protection of other vulnerable groups; the fight against international terrorism and transnational crime; and accession to the relevant international conventions.

This last commitment, beyond resolution 1373 (2001), is of immediate importance and more urgent than ever before. We have no choice but to redouble our efforts to conclude, as soon as possible, negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Globalization — or, more precisely, the humanization of globalization — is indeed a challenge of great consequences. We must act collectively to channel and transform globalization into a positive force benefiting all humanity, instead of allowing the developing countries, particularly in Africa, to suffer the negative effects of marginalization and exclusion, which are a Procrustean bed giving rise to frustration and sometimes the most hate-filled outbursts.

How, in these conditions, can we make the process of globalization more unifying, democratic and inclusive? How can we further integrate the countries of the South into the global economy, and what strategies should be employed so that globalization becomes the shared patrimony of humankind?

Since the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), just held in Doha, has taken up these existential and normative questions, Senegal voices the hope that the soon-to-be-announced new cycle of multilateral trade negotiations will provide innovative and pragmatic responses to the eternal call for access to markets for all, in strict respect of the rules of the game by all.

Senegal fully subscribes to Secretary-General Kofi Annan's strategy and road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. We have to act in concert, in the spirit of solidarity, shared responsibility, justice and equity, in order to significantly improve access to the markets of the developed world for the agricultural products of developing countries by eliminating the obstacles to trade and by promoting awareness of the need to protect the nascent industries and the agriculture of the African countries. This is a fundamental requirement and an inescapable precondition in promoting food security and economic development — in short, in the framework of human security, which is a concept so dear to our Japanese friends.

This would be only fair. It is difficult for us to understand the paradox that was so aptly pointed out by the President of the Republic of Senegal, who said,

> "The countries of the North spend a billion dollars a day to prop up their agriculture, while asking us to agree to open our meagre markets to the competition of their subsidized products; furthermore, their high productivity means that they can utilize techniques that are beyond our reach."

The universal objective of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015 could be achieved, despite tendencies in the opposite direction, if the wealthy agreed to make it possible for the poor to have the minimal conditions to enjoy sustained economic growth and agreed to support their national plans for

combating poverty and hunger by encouraging an increase in production in general and food production in particular; by improving access to markets for their agriculture products; by increasing investment in the health and water sectors; and by helping the affected countries to acquire the necessary capacity to stem the dizzying spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. This requires an exceptional mobilization of additional resources to finance development. It requires a fundamental revision of the debt/debt-rescheduling/overindebtedness triangle and an overhaul of official development assistance, which is exponentially decreasing even while remaining the principal source of financing for the least developed countries.

Analysing these experiences, one realizes today that the unceasing aid/credit duality and the infernal cycle of indebtedness and rescheduling that follows can no longer ensure financing for the development of the countries of the South. What is important now, when the capital markets have tremendous funds available to them, is to explore new ways and means of financing. Consequently, Senegal ardently hopes that the International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held next year in Monterrey, Mexico, will respond to our legitimate expectations.

Even if the rumblings of progress have been heard here and there, we are still a long way from the commitments that have been proclaimed urbi et orbi regarding the African problem. Senegal welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General has made this his leitmotif and his priority. My country recognizes and hails the meritorious efforts that Kofi Annan has made to place Africa at the top of the world agenda.

It is our duty and responsibility to support the Secretary-General's initiatives in order to give concrete effect to the decisions of the Millennium Summit, so that the strategies contained in document A/56/326 will enable humanity's oldest continent to become more harmoniously integrated in the globalized world market. This is the essential purpose of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), instituted by the African heads of State and Government at their Summit last July in Lusaka.

The unique aspect of NEPAD is that it was conceived by Africans themselves for Africa. Based on the concept of self-reliance, thinking and acting by oneself and for oneself, this breakthrough strategy has highlighted the priorities of the continent. It contains pragmatic and realistic objectives, including making up the resource deficit, increasing internal savings and attracting private external capital in order to finance infrastructure, agriculture, education and health — in short, to pave the way to sustainable and endogenous development in Africa, in peace and security.

In this connection, I am pleased to announce that, at the request of the five initiators — Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa — and with the support of our development partners, my country will, during the first quarter of 2002, host an international conference in Dakar on the financing of NEPAD.

In speaking of the specific needs of Africa, we cannot shy away from the thorny question of conflict prevention and settlement, the problems involved in the consolidation of peace and the management of post-conflict situations or the disquieting equation of illicit traffic in arms and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

It is important to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to step up support for the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and to support its Peace Fund.

In the same spirit, it is of crucial importance to continuously follow up the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871).

In the future, the Security Council must continue to play its essential part by paying the requisite attention to peace in Africa, by becoming more directly and specifically engaged in peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building operations.

It is equally urgent to implement the important recommendations contained in the Ibrahima Fall report, which deals with the situation in West Africa. In this connection, Senegal very much appreciates the very apt decision taken by the Secretary-General, and supported by the Security Council, to open a United Nations Office for West Africa in Dakar. As a Senegalese, I am very pleased to confirm that arrangements are now

being made to grant to that Office all the facilities that it requires to function properly.

The international community's solidarity and support are essential if we are to deal with the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. While Senegal, as the Secretary-General has emphasized, has managed to limit the rate of infection to less than 2 per cent, AIDS unfortunately continues to ravage a number of fraternal countries, to destabilize economic and social structures and to undermine development efforts.

This is why it is of vital urgency for all to implement the Declaration of Commitment adopted by the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to this epidemic, and to support the efforts of the African leaders to implement the Abuja Declaration, which was adopted in April 2001, at the end of the meeting of African Heads of State on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other contagious diseases.

Similarly, my country welcomes the Secretary-General's appointment of a Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, and my country appeals to donor countries to provide sufficient financial resources for the Global AIDS and Health Fund. We believe the same attention should be paid to malaria, which kills more than a million people a year in Africa, most of them children.

The Millennium Summit also addressed the questions of human rights, democracy and good governance. As a member of the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, Senegal welcomes the almost universal consensus that has been achieved with regard to the urgent need to protect and promote human rights, ensure equality and equity between genders, and defend the rights of children, religious and ethnic minorities, migrant workers and members of their families, and refugees and displaced persons and so on.

The World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which was held in Durban in August and September 2001, forcefully reaffirmed those various needs. My delegation supports the strategy proposed by the Secretary-General designed, among other things, to ensure respect for the rights of the human being everywhere and in all circumstances and to promote a world campaign for the universal ratification of human rights instruments.

I shall conclude my remarks shortly, but first I would like to welcome Mr. Kofi Annan's fortunate initiative to establish a Youth Employment Network. The important recommendations formulated by the 12-person High-level Panel deserve our favourable consideration. Those recommendations emanate from the commitments entered into during the Millennium Summit to build a better world and to ensure full employment for young people. The Assembly will recall that the question of the employment of young people was at the centre of concerns of the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System, which my country had the honour of hosting last August. Through me, Senegal would like to say that it is particularly pleased with the creation of the Network by the Secretary-General and officially to reiterate its willingness to be among one of the first pilot countries.

Today more than in the past, the United Nations has at its disposal a package of programmatic information and strategic guidelines to carry out a sacred mission: to ensure international peace and security and promote social and economic development through international cooperation. Those guidelines and recommendations were very well defined by the Millennium Summit, which brought together the largest number of heads of State and Government in the more than 50 years of our Organization's existence.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The question now is to proceed to take action while always keeping our main concern in mind, namely, to strengthen the common tool we have in the United Nations in order to make it more democratic and to expose it to the positive inspiration provided by new types of global partnership in the clear interest of the peoples of the United Nations.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): One year ago, at the largest gathering in the history of the United Nations, some 190 heads of State and Government and delegations gathered to adopt the Millennium Declaration, which defined a new formula for international relations and for the future of the entire world. We are meeting today to discuss a document that is no less important, namely, a clearly defined road map leading to the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation for the valuable report prepared by the Secretary-General on ways and means of implementing the Declaration.

Given the limitations of time and the size of the report, I shall simply provide an outline of Egypt's position. Our full position will be expressed in the proceedings of the various Main Committees of the General Assembly and in the consultations on the draft resolution. My remarks today will be confined to a single subject. That subject is the issue of how the report may be used to achieve one of the Charter's basic purposes and principles that is an integral part of the whole array of diverse and complex issues, namely, achieving world peace and security and the relationship between peace and security and the eradication of poverty.

In recent weeks we have seen on the international arena quickly developing events with far-reaching consequences that have claimed the lives of many innocent victims. The silver lining to those events may be the resulting world unity in confronting terrorism, which runs counter to all religions, laws and beliefs. The time may have arrived to do some soul-searching and to learn the lessons of those crises by pursuing a comprehensive vision that would take into account the significant linkage between action at the national and international levels and the various interrelated factors that have a direct impact, negative or positive, on global conditions. No one can enjoy stability if there is not development for all; sustainable development for all will remain unattainable without a joint international effort that addresses the root causes of problems. Merely to address symptoms and mete out temporary solutions will not suffice.

It is commendable that the report of the Secretary-General has focused on the need to uphold the rule of law and to take measures against transnational crime. Talking about efforts for development and stability will be ineffective without the rule of law and the cooperation of the international community in combating organized crime and all other forms of international crime, primarily terrorism. In that regard, we welcome the statements in the report regarding the early entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. That would constitute a great humanitarian step towards the achievement of the universal implementation of human rights and the rule of law.

We also wish to commend the report for referring to the 1999 statement by the Secretary-General regarding compliance by United Nations peacekeeping forces with international humanitarian law. This step underscores the fact that international humanitarian law applies not only to forces operating in conflict areas, but also to conflicts themselves and to the practices and policies of parties to a conflict.

While we welcome the call on all States to accede as soon as possible to all international conventions regarding the fight against terrorism, we nevertheless wish to reiterate Egypt's call for an international conference to examine ways to combat terrorism through joint international efforts to coordinate and cooperate to drain the sources of terrorism and uproot its cells and networks. We also call for speedy completion of the draft comprehensive convention to fight terrorism by focusing in a balanced manner on the convention's primary objective of ensuring peace, security and stability for mankind, and the right of all peoples to fully achieve their aspirations.

Among other things, recent events have demonstrated beyond a doubt that poverty, backwardness and the decline in growth rates all provide a fertile ground for terrorist cells to spread their destructive ideas and to fuel hatred and conflict among societies.

Egypt therefore stresses that the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development are equally the responsibility of all of us, both North and South. This will require all of us to forge a genuine international partnership, anchored in a true awareness of our common destiny, and to seek, due to the interdependence of nations throughout the world, to fulfil the objectives agreed upon and set out in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcome documents of the United Nations conferences and the special sessions of the General Assembly of the past decade.

We welcome the report's recommendations relating to ways and means of achieving the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. However, there is a need for greater balance regarding the workings of the institutional mechanisms at the international level so as to ensure that the democratic deficit in the decision-making process is addressed. We must also redouble our efforts to ensure the genuine participation of the developing countries in those mechanisms. That goes to the heart of sound governance, the achievement of which — as world leaders agreed within the framework of the Millennium Declaration — is important at both the national and international levels.

Today more than ever, we must realize that the phenomenon of globalization is creating serious challenges as a result of the exacerbation of poverty, the inequitable distribution of wealth within or among States and the serious fluctuations in the performance of international financial markets. As the Secretary-General rightly said in his report, integration into the world economy is not in itself a magic wand that can ensure sustainable development; it must be accompanied by measures taken at both the domestic and international levels.

Egypt would like to stress that while the outcome of the Doha summit was modest as far as the developing countries were concerned, the developed countries still have a chance to shoulder their responsibilities and maintain the credibility of multilateral international action.

Perhaps the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which are scheduled to take place next year, will bring about the progress that we all desire. We also hope that the international community will show how serious it is about addressing the challenges of poverty and combating desertification and the degradation of soil — problems that affect developing countries in particular, especially in Africa, where according to statistics over 70 per cent of its poor population live in rural areas. The international community must reaffirm its commitment to helping developing countries by fully implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Studies have shown that halving by 2015 the number of people in Africa who live in absolute poverty would require the economy of the continent to grow at an average annual rate of at least 7 per cent. That would require us to bridge the financial gap, which exceeds 20 per cent of regional gross domestic product. We wonder where the continent will be able to obtain all the resources it needs, given the current trade and financial systems. What is required right now are not academic exercises diagnosing poverty, but a multidisciplinary approach to the problem that addresses international trade issues, official development assistance and foreign direct investment and provides a drastic solution to the issue of foreign debts of developing countries. I welcome the comments in the report regarding the need to take into account the special needs of Africa and to make full use of the New African Initiative in mobilizing international efforts to support the development of Africa.

In closing, I would like to refer to another danger that imperils humankind: the growing health crises. Given the growing global awareness of the problem of HIV/AIDS, we must also pay adequate attention to diseases that are closely related — opportunistic infections that attack patients when their immune system has collapsed, in particular tuberculosis, new strains of which are very difficult to treat. Suffice it to say that 40 per cent of people infected with HIV/AIDS in Africa are also suffering from tuberculosis, which is a major cause of death for HIV-infected people. Malaria is also responsible for the high death rate among children in Africa. Twice as many people are dying from malaria as from HIV/AIDS.

We therefore fully appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General to establish the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and we express particular appreciation to all those countries that have contributed to the Fund, which now amounts to $1.5 billion. We hope that the Fund will expand its operations so as to address all manifestations of the HIV/AIDS virus in order to curtail its spread.

In this statement we have tried to make a contribution to the current debate on ways of implementing the objectives of the Millennium Declaration through a comprehensive approach that delves into the substance of the issues and pays special attention to specifics. Two points have emerged from the comments we have heard so far — and I am sure that we will hear them again today and tomorrow.

First, the maintenance of international peace and security is not an abstract objective that can be obtained without true belief in the common destiny of humankind. This belief requires all Member States to make joint efforts to build a better future through international cooperation in all areas, in the interests of security and peace.

Secondly, the best and most comprehensive declarations and documents cannot be implemented without genuine collective will and sincere international resolve to achieve universal, balanced and just development for the entire international community.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): Last year, we adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which

world leaders made crucial commitments towards achieving our vision of society in the twenty-first century. Since then, there have been a number of important developments that will ultimately have an impact upon the goals of the Millennium Declaration and their fulfilment in the envisaged time frame. I am referring to the tragic events of 11 September and the common fight against terrorism, as well as the significant decline in the world economy. However, these events make the Millennium Declaration goals even more important and require our additional efforts.

The historic Millennium Summit and the follow-up to it should continue to be among the priorities of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We have to continue to deal with the commitments made in the Declaration towards its full implementation. The United Nations has to be able to deal with the global agenda, including all the global conferences of the 1990s, through the integrated follow-up to the Summit. Already, it is disquieting to note that signs of waning commitment to a truly integrated follow-up to the Millennium Summit have begun to manifest themselves. Therefore, full and constant cooperation of Member States and the Secretariat in the fulfilment of this goal is essential.

We would like to extend our deepest congratulations to the Secretary-General for the remarkable road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Its clarity and precision make it an excellent guide and plan of action for the full achievement of our goals.

Peace, security and disarmament should be at the top of our priorities. Without peace there can be no economic and social prosperity. The latest endeavours within the anti-terrorist coalition have shown that only if all the Member States are united and show strong political will can we make a positive breakthrough. In this regard, special attention should be given to conflict prevention, strengthening of peacekeeping operations and disarmament. Croatia is intensifying its efforts to participate more substantially in peacekeeping operations and is therefore, for the first time, allocating appropriate funds in next year's national budget. The goal is to step up its contribution from the current level of military observers to the level of smaller specialized units.

The work being done in the field of disarmament is insufficient. Many processes are stalled, especially those in the field of chemical and biological weapons, not to mention nuclear weapons. The Croatian Government treats the issue of disarmament as one of its priorities. It is especially important because of the ongoing reform of the Croatian armed forces and because of the obligations assumed under the regional framework. We are particularly active in the field of mine action, and, as a party to the Ottawa Convention, we will soon fulfil all its requirements.

Year after year we witness significant developments in the field of human rights law, such as acceptance of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocols to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, as well as broader acceptance of United Nations norms by Member States. Together, hopefully, these will finally lead to the globalization of human rights and a universally recognized international code of human rights. As Governments, we must provide the conditions for their universal acceptance.

The Republic of Croatia attaches great importance to the protection and the promotion of human rights, democracy and rule of law. Croatia has accepted the highest international standards in the field of human rights by acceding to numerous international instruments in the field of human rights, including all six core United Nations human rights treaties. The Republic of Croatia particularly welcomes the crucial commitment made by the world leaders towards promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the Millennium Declaration. My delegation emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming gender perspective in the implementation of the Millennium road map.

The encouraging developments this year in the sphere of international criminal justice — including the growing number of States adhering to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the beginning of the trial of Milošević and the steps towards the establishment of the special tribunals for Sierra Leone and Cambodia — strengthen our belief that we are witnessing the forging of a new international legal order. Croatia ratified the Rome Statute in March this year, being the first country in the region to do so. While we will continue to support and cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Croatia nonetheless has a compelling interest in the establishment of a truly

global and credible International Criminal Court, founded on the principle of the sovereign equality or equally reduced sovereignty of all States. With the possibility of putting the ICC into operation now in sight, we remain optimistic that — instead of ad hoc adjudication, which, by its nature, is selective and limited in reach and, as such, nothing more than a palliative — the societies of tomorrow will not only be able to punish, but also to prevent the most atrocious international crimes through a permanent International Criminal Court with universal jurisdiction.

Given the great uncertainty the global economy now must face in the light of recent events, we must not be deterred in our resolve to keep the development agenda at the forefront of all areas of the United Nations substantive agenda and to make it a reality for everyone.

The spirit of cooperation and solidarity that emerged after 11 September should be reflected not only in our fight against terrorism, but in the eradication of poverty and other social and economic goals. The institutional capacities and universal nature of the United Nations place it at the helm of the international organizations that can bring about, at least in part, the effective management of globalization. It is hope of the Croatian delegation that, together with the other events, the convening of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Mexico during March 2002 will keep our commitment on track and that its mandated outcome will live up to all our expectations.

As I stressed at the outset, we must double our efforts. We must commit ourselves to showing stronger political will and resolve to fulfil the noble goals of the Millennium Declaration, which are essential for peace, stability and prosperity in the twenty-first century. Only by working together can we make a difference.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, endorse this statement.

Fourteen months ago our heads of State and Government adopted the Millennium Declaration, thus reaffirming their faith in the Organization and in its Charter, which are the cornerstones to a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The message to the rest of the world is loud and clear: the principles and values on which our Organization is founded are universal, and the objectives that we set for our Organization cannot be attained unless we all pull together to attain them.

In their foresight, our heads of State and Government firmly reiterated that the fundamental principles that must underpin international relations in the twenty-first century are freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibilities. Reaffirmation of these values has assumed its full significance in the world that is now emerging from the debris of the World Trade Center, as we have seen particularly at the ministerial meeting on dialogue among civilizations and during the general debate last week.

I started by mentioning the Millennium Declaration because the European Union would first and foremost like to recall its strong commitment to this founding document and to the principles and objectives that it clearly sets out. In this context, the implementation the Declaration should be faithful to both the letter and the spirit of the Declaration itself. We believe that the Secretary-General's report presenting a road map for implementing the Millennium Declaration is a first step towards its implementation, since it makes a full inventory of the efforts our Organization must make to help attain the various objectives.

In fact, in the future we are expecting the Secretary-General to give us annual progress reports not only on what our Organization and its specialized agencies have accomplished with a view to achieving the objectives of the Millennium Declaration, but also on the progress of Member States in this regard, particularly in the framework of the follow-up of major conferences. In short, we would like the Millennium Declaration to be the touchstone for any practical steps taken by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and by all our Governments.

This calls for more discipline from all of us. Rationalization of the agenda of the General Assembly should be the expected outcome. We also need to agree

on the criteria and parameters for determining progress made, including at the national level.

The Millennium Declaration gives us an opportunity to make this multifaceted action more effective and coherent, with a view to achieving the objectives that we have set ourselves. The wide variety of actors involved, particularly in the area of development and human rights, means that we must set common markers to indicate the way forward. It is these markers that we are asking the Secretary-General to provide on a regular basis, in a succinct and operational form, particularly concerning the development objectives that appear in the annex to the Secretary-General's report.

We should recall that the objectives of the Millennium Declaration are ambitious. We cannot lose time in getting down to work; the European Union is absolutely convinced of this. We would like this kind of guidance to be given every year, on the basis of information available throughout the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, in the various areas covered by the Millennium Declaration. Furthermore, we insist that the other main players — the non-governmental organizations, civil society and academia — continue to be duly consulted.

We know that the road leading to the Millennium Declaration objectives is a difficult one, as it is both foggy and much travelled. That is why it needs to be clearly and precisely marked out.

It is also a road with many forks, and it is essential that we do not take the wrong paths. That is why we would like to have at regular intervals — in fact, every five years — a report that is no longer merely factual, such as the guidance reports, but political, to enable us to take stock of the situation and make the necessary decisions in order to take the road leading us in the best possible way to our final destination.

The Secretary-General's report before us has focused particularly on the Millennium Declaration objectives for development, and we welcome this approach, which corresponds to the absolute priority of the European Union and its development partners. However, we would like the forthcoming guidance reports to give consideration specifically to the objectives of reproductive health in all its aspects.

The Secretary-General's report proposes submitting thematic reports each year on current topics — topics that have been dealt with at major United Nations conferences. We are in favour of this suggestion on the clear understanding that it should aim at ensuring coherence between these conferences and the general objectives of the Millennium Declaration, and that it does not lead to duplication with any monitoring process that might be decided at those conferences.

Such integrated monitoring will have to be put in place gradually, while safeguarding the integrity of the Millennium Declaration and the specific achievements of the major conferences. From this viewpoint, some rationalization of the proceedings of the General Assembly and of its Committees will also be necessary.

The European Union is in favour of the suggestions made by the Secretary-General for the thematic reports from 2002 to 2004, the choices having been made in the light of the activities of the special sessions and conferences scheduled for the coming years. However, the emergence of new priorities after the tragic events of 11 September might justify some adjustments, which the European Union is perfectly prepared to consider.

Mr. Posta (Hungary): Hungary fully associates itself with the statement just made by the representative of Belgium, who spoke on behalf of the European Union and its associated countries. Therefore, I would like to limit myself to only a couple of remarks that have special significance for my country.

Hungary warmly welcomes the report of the Secretary-General presented to the General Assembly on the road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. We see it as a logical, necessary and useful response in order to ensure the full implementation of the Declaration's goals. We reaffirm our conviction that the Millennium Declaration is an outstanding document containing commitments of fundamental importance aimed at improving human conditions in the new century. There is no doubt that the fulfilment of these commitments will result in a more secure, just and sustainable world for our children, and making the United Nations stronger and more efficient will facilitate the attainment of this objective.

The goals and strategies outlined in this document, as well as the proposed actions to

implement them, enjoy Hungary's full support. We see particular merit in the document's comprehensiveness, and we support the endeavour to handle these complex issues in a system-wide approach. Through the proposed system of annual progress reports and the quinquennial comprehensive reports, the international community will be able to follow and monitor what has already been accomplished and give new impetus to the implementation of the tasks still ahead of us. This is why the road map can be used as a primary plan of action by Member States, as well as by the organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, intergovernmental organizations and other actors of civil society.

The realization of the development objectives of the Declaration will be a demanding task in the coming years. The economic and financial consequences of the tragic events of 11 September for the development of the world economy will require increased efforts to avoid a negative impact on development objectives stemming from the slowdown of economic growth and increasing unemployment.

Hence, a coordinated and coherent answer is required from Member States and the United Nations. We are pleased to see that in many areas, the first steps have already been taken by the specialized agencies and various actors to meet these challenges. As an example, let me refer to the importance of the goal, formulated in the road map, to develop and implement strategies that would give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work. As noted by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network:

> "In the next 10 years 1.2 billion young women and men will enter into the working age population, the best educated and trained generation of young people ever, a great potential for economic and social development." (*A/56/422, para. 4 (i)*)

In this context, it is proposed to Member States that they elaborate national strategies on these issues. It is our common responsibility to explore imaginative approaches in creating opportunities for the younger generation, and we are pleased to see support for joint efforts by the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the World Bank in the framework of the United Nations High- Level Policy Network on Youth Employment. My country has offered its financial support and expertise for the activities of the Network, to be carried out in 10 countries as proposed by the High-level Panel, and stands ready to participate in the development of policy recommendations by sharing its own experience.

Let me reaffirm my Government's support and cooperation with regard to meeting the goals and commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration. I express my confidence that the draft resolution to be submitted by the President of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): At the Millennium Summit, all Member States of our Organization pledged themselves to development objectives and reaffirmed their common vision for a prosperous, peaceful and just world. They adopted the Millennium Declaration — a historic blueprint for common action in the new century. The task now is to devise practical ways and means to attain these noble objectives. In this regard, Mongolia highly commends the integrated and comprehensive approach outlined by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration".

My delegation finds the report before us very useful. We agree with the Secretary-General that at this stage what is needed is not more technical or feasibility studies, but rather the political will to carry out the commitments and implement the strategies already worked out. The report is simple and yet very informative. The eight goals, 18 targets and more than 40 indicators given in the report form, in our view, a good basis for devising the ways and means of implementing the Declaration as well as for working out the criteria against which the international community could assess the progress of implementation. The Mongolian delegation finds the background information — including the statistical data, where available — that is provided for each target to be very useful. Likewise, we find the strategies for moving forward to be helpful. On the other hand, we believe the formulation of some of the goals set out in the report are too general, and it is difficult to break down their implementation into stages.

My delegation concurs with you, Mr. President, that the draft road map provides us with a solid foundation and benchmark on which we can proceed

with the implementation of the Declaration in the years to come.

In his report the Secretary-General proposes to submit annual reports and comprehensive reports every five years. My delegation could agree with such an approach. As to the themes for the reports to be submitted in 2002, 2003 and 2004, we believe that some additional consultations would be required before the Assembly could take a decision on them.

The Government of Mongolia is fully determined to attain the goals of the Millennium Declaration at the national level and has been taking concrete steps to that end. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that earlier this month my delegation submitted to the Secretary-General its Government's memorandum on the implementation of the Declaration, which can be found in document A/56/606.

Mongolia's policy measures to implement the Millennium Declaration have been drawn from our past experience as well as from the discussions and recommendations of a joint conference organized in September in Mongolia by our Government and the United Nations under the theme "Forty years of Mongolia-United Nations Cooperation: Implementation of the Millennium Declaration".

The 1992 Constitution of Mongolia reflects the vision of the fundamental values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance and respect for nature outlined in the Millennium Declaration. Furthermore, the principle of shared responsibility has found reflection in the basic concepts of national security and foreign policy, adopted back in 1994. Over the past decade, the successive Governments of Mongolia have promoted these goals by mobilizing domestic resources and drawing on the external experience and assistance of the international community. As a result, Mongolia has made real progress in its political reforms.

As to economic reforms, substantial efforts have been made in fostering a market economy, achieving macroeconomic stability, advancing privatization and improving infrastructure. However, we admit that much still needs to be done.

In addition to the difficulties associated with its transition, Mongolia's landlocked location and ecological conditions pose fundamental challenges to its economic development and security, making it a prime case of economic vulnerability. However, to attain the goals of the Millennium Declaration, Mongolia needs to accelerate its economic development. Owing to its heavy dependence on a few export commodities, Mongolia's economy remains highly vulnerable to external shocks and harsh terms of trade.

Trade represents an important engine of growth and a means of developing cooperation among nations. However, because of their geographical location, the landlocked countries find themselves structurally disadvantaged when it comes to benefiting equally from trade liberalization. For this reason, the Millennium Declaration recognized the special needs and problems of the 30 landlocked developing countries, half of which are also least developed countries. The high transit costs of their exports and imports negate whatever comparative advantage they could otherwise have in world trade.

The challenges that landlocked developing countries are facing are clearly highlighted in paragraph 156 of the report. My delegation fully agrees with the conclusion that

> "The high transport costs of landlocked countries imports impose a significant economic burden on the economies of landlocked countries in the form of inflated prices of both consumer and intermediate inputs, such as fuel."

Although my delegation could agree with the three strategies proposed in paragraph 157 to address those challenges and difficulties, and could agree that the proportion of official development assistance allocated for the transport sector in landlocked countries could be taken as an indicator for attaining the target, we believe that some concrete statistical target or indicator should be developed so that we can constantly monitor and assess the implementation of the goal. In that regard, my delegation, together with those of other landlocked developing countries, could provide some specific proposals to the Secretary-General.

As outlined in the memorandum of the Mongolian Government annexed to document A/56/606, poverty is one of the critical issues that Mongolia faces today. Thirty-six per cent of the population lives in poverty, a phenomenon that, unfortunately, accompanied our decade-long process of transition. Between 1994 and 2000, the Government of Mongolia implemented its National Poverty Alleviation Programme with the

support of the international community. The primary goal of the programme was to halt the growing trend towards poverty in our country. To that end, more than 13,000 small-scale projects have been undertaken with the active participation of civil society. A national survey conducted last year unfortunately showed that the level of poverty has not been reduced in an atmosphere of continued economic hardship.

In accordance with the present poverty-reduction strategy, which is harmonized with and supported by broad-based, people-oriented and labour-intensive growth strategies, the Government of Mongolia is aiming to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty by at least 25 per cent by 2005, and to halve it by 2015, as envisaged in the Millennium Declaration

Mongolia is resolved to fully implement the Millennium Declaration goals. Domestic resources to meet those goals are limited. External sources of financing are therefore important. We have no doubt that the continued support and assistance of the international community — of both our bilateral and our multilateral development partners — will remain crucial in our efforts to achieve the Millennium Declaration goals. Furthermore, Mongolia hopes that the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development will provide fresh impetus for the attainment of those goals.

Mongolia has taken the first steps to implement the goals of the Millennium Declaration. It sees many challenges ahead in the implementation process. Nevertheless, Mongolia believes that with political will, adequate resources, a correct strategy and cooperation, the noble goals of the Declaration are attainable. The spirit of partnership and shared responsibility that shaped the Millennium Declaration are also essential to translate the vision into reality. To that end Mongolia is prepared to cooperate closely with the organizations of the United Nations family, its fellow members and international financial and economic institutions.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): The Millennium Summit did not address new problems or reveal new challenges hitherto unknown to mankind. What it did, however, was this: world leaders set goals to make the world better by, inter alia, removing the political and economic barriers that divide our world into a world of the haves and another world of the have-nots. They rekindled the hope and trust of millions that poverty and deprivation is not their destiny. However, in paragraph 81 of his report (A/56/326), the Secretary-General points out the gap between commitments and their implementation. The commitments made at the Summit are the first step in the process of implementing the goals set in the Millennium Declaration. Our task here, therefore, is to find the most effective ways and means to transform them into reality. After all, the Millennium Declaration was meant first and foremost to transform the lives of those who live on a dollar a day, those who are born, live and die in war and those who live in conditions not fit for humans.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his report, setting out his road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, which in its totality is important and timely and which addresses issues in a comprehensive manner. I shall address some of those issues.

The Secretary-General could not have put it better: the international community should move from an era of mere commitment to one of implementation. We believe that it is in that spirit that we, the Member States, should consider the strategies recommended in the report. It is the translation of commitments into deeds by all Member States that will bring about the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and thus distinguish it from the outcome of so many other gatherings.

Indeed, the number of conflicts has declined while peace agreements have increased. But that does not necessarily translate into the end of conflict. Immense suffering as a result of ongoing armed conflict still prevails. We must examine the causes in the context of the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the context of strengthening the international rule of law, the period 19 September to 5 October 2001 was earmarked to focus on the rights of women and children. That event — an invitation to universal participation in multilateral treaties relating to the rights of women and children — was scheduled to coincide with the special session of the General Assembly on children. While the special session was rescheduled, the treaty event remains relevant for the advancement of the status of women worldwide. In that

regard, we call on Member States to sign the 23 selected treaties on the advancement of women's and children's rights. It is proven that when women participate in all aspects of their societies on an equal footing, not only do they benefit as they become empowered, but the entire society benefits.

Namibia supports the goals of the United Nations with respect to resolving armed conflict. Indeed, we must move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. For now, however, we must adopt an effective strategy to resolve the conflicts which are bleeding Africa to death.

The problem does not lie in the lack of fact-finding missions and confidence-building missions or in the good offices of the Secretary-General. The major constraint is that there is a selective approach in the implementation of the findings of the Security Council. This issue should be taken into account in the strategies proposed, with a view to resolving armed conflicts.

Peacekeeping is a vital instrument and an integral part of the efforts of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security. Over the years, peacekeeping has become the responsibility mainly of developing countries. Currently, 8 of the top 10 troop contributors are developing countries. What does this say about the financing of peacekeeping operations? And, even more poignantly, what can we deduce from this in terms of the equipment available to the peacekeepers? Namibia believes, therefore, that, as we work on peacekeeping reform, financing for peacekeeping operations and the participation of all Member States in United Nations peacekeeping operations should be seriously addressed.

Peace-building is an integral part of peacekeeping. We have seen that peace-building measures can indeed facilitate the difficult process of the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

However, experience has shown that peace-building is more effective when it commences early and is carried out on a long-term basis.

Namibia's position on disarmament is well known, and we welcome the convening of an international conference devoted to disarmament. Such a conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations. While the arms race in outer space poses real dangers, many of our people are suffering as a result of the proliferation of small arms stemming from the illicit trafficking and trade in small arms and light weapons.

In this context, Namibia supports the holding in 2006 of a United Nations review conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

HIV/AIDS continues to create havoc in our region. The number of AIDS orphans is soaring, and the challenge is proving difficult. Any strategy aimed at addressing this scourge and at assisting the most affected should take into account the situation of AIDS orphans. We welcome the establishment of the Inter-agency Task Team on Orphans and Vulnerable Children, and hope its work can indeed assist in devising concrete and effective plans to take care of these needy children.

We have studied the goals and strategies proposed in the section on meeting Africa's special needs. It is one thing — and a very good thing indeed — for Africa to democratize, but it is quite another to stand by African countries thereafter. Democratization is not an end in itself. This is a vital point, for too often we have seen countries plunge back into civil strife following the conclusion of successful elections. The strategies proposed by the Secretary-General in the area of capacity-building are essential. Let me emphasize that this support should be long-term, taking into account the needs of each specific situation. It is also essential that effective support be rendered to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

In paragraph 251 of the report, the Secretary-General states that 33 of the 41 heavily indebted poor countries are in Africa. Debt relief for Africa is therefore indispensable for the economies of the African countries to become viable.

The strategies proposed by the Secretary-General to tackle HIV/AIDS in Africa, when implemented, will complement the efforts of African countries themselves.

The implementation of the strategies to address Africa's special needs should bring together the various initiatives on Africa to complement the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The General Assembly is the only organ in which any Member of the United Nations can participate in

the debate on any issue under discussion. It is the most open and transparent organ of the United Nations, and it should stay that way. For example, as we proceed to consider the possible biannualization of agenda items, it is important that we draw lessons from similar exercises we undertook in some of the Main Committees of the General Assembly. For Namibia, the fact that the General Assembly is the chief deliberative policy-making and representative organ implies that its deliberations on items will reflect its status.

The process of reform of the Security Council cannot continue indefinitely. We cannot be dissatisfied with the present composition of the Council, yet, through our action or inaction, do everything to maintain the status quo. The working methods of the Security Council cannot be improved as long as its structure remains unchanged. The reform of the Council should therefore be accelerated.

The Economic and Social Council comprises 55 Member States and has been functioning well. Namibia concurs with the strategies proposed to advance the work of the Economic and Social Council. However, we wish to point out that the economic development-oriented commissions of the Council should be strengthened. I am referring here particularly to the Commission on Science and Technology and to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). These are among the most important bodies with respect to the economic development of developing countries, and the ongoing reform of the Economic and Social Council should therefore strengthen them.

We welcome the proposed coordination among the organs of the United Nations and the need for Member States to meet their financial Charter obligations without conditions, in full and on time. We also concur with the strategies aimed at ensuring the safety of United Nations and associated personnel.

Namibia is an active member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and, as such, we strongly support the direct engagement of parliamentarians in substantive issues being addressed by the United Nations.

We have taken note of the proposals of the Secretary-General on follow-up reporting, and we will make comments on them at the appropriate time.

Mr. Abdul Jabar (Malaysia): My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on this item. The Millennium Declaration, adopted in September last year, was intended to orient the United Nations to the new realities of the global environment, to be more proactive and to ensure its continued relevance to all of its Members, particularly the developing countries.

Most of the targets of the Declaration are not new. Many of them were derived from the outcome of the global conferences held in the 1990s. Unfortunately, due to a lack of political will, there was no follow-up on the part of many Member States, who failed to honour their commitments. We should therefore welcome the road map that the Secretary-General has now proposed as an important contribution towards the implementation of these targets.

Adherence to international law is an important pillar of the new world order that would characterize the new century and millennium. In this regard, the universal acceptance of treaties is of utmost importance. Malaysia attaches great importance to the initiatives taken by the United Nations to promote the rule of law at the international level. We recognize that treaties are one of the main sources of international law, and we are gratified that States are increasingly resorting to treaties to regulate their relations. The universality and binding force of multilateral treaties would be enhanced if many States comprising the international community were parties to such treaties. We strongly believe that in negotiations to elaborate treaties, the views of as many countries as possible should be taken into consideration and all efforts should be expanded to reach consensus, particularly on controversial issues, thereby enabling universal acceptance.

Malaysia has always taken its international obligations seriously and therefore takes a cautious approach by undertaking a thorough study before finally committing itself to a treaty. We welcome the role of the Secretary-General as depositary of more than 500 major treaties and commend him in the efforts he has made to encourage Member States to accede to those treaties and conventions. We are pleased to respond by depositing three instruments of ratification and acceptance at this session of the General Assembly.

My delegation is also pleased to note that there is increasing awareness of the role of the International

Court of Justice in the peaceful settlement of international disputes. This has contributed not only to the reduction of tension between States, but also to the promotion of peace and harmony between them, particularly neighbouring States. In promoting the role of the world Court, we must adequately equip it to deal with the dramatic increase in its workload in recent years. Revitalizing and strengthening the International Court of Justice would certainly contribute to its efficiency and enhance its role in the promotion of justice under international law.

My delegation notes with concern that despite the ending of the cold war, global military spending has increased from an estimated $762 billion in 1998 to approximately $800 billion in 2000. Malaysia strongly advocates further reductions of armaments, both conventional and nuclear. We note with alarm the use of highly sophisticated conventional weapons in many of the wars of the developing countries, even when they can hardly afford them.

We believe, however, that the greatest threat to the survival of humankind is that posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and we call for serious efforts for their elimination. With respect to nuclear weapons, we believe that the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, delivered in July 1996, was a positive major development and a significant contribution by the world Court to the campaign for nuclear disarmament. We are gratified that the Secretary-General's report made reference to this historic advisory opinion. Regrettably, it continues to be ignored by the nuclear-weapon States.

Malaysia and other like-minded countries will continue efforts for follow-up action to the advisory opinion in the First Committee. We therefore strongly support the Secretary-General's call for the convening of an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. We also support his continuous efforts to ensure the full implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention and to promote their universality.

Malaysia has completed its destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel landmines and, therefore, has accordingly fulfilled its obligations under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention — the first Asian country to do so. We remain committed to the attainment of a truly universal ban on anti-personnel landmines. We remain firm in our conviction that the humanitarian suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines far outweighs their military utility. It remains our hope and expectation that there will be a stronger political push for the universal acceptance of this treaty. We call on all States to favourably consider acceding to the Convention and make every effort to fulfil their obligations by eliminating the use of this inhumane weapon.

In the area of peacekeeping, Malaysia welcomes efforts to strengthen the peacekeeping capabilities of the United Nations. We also welcome increasing collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations. However, such collaboration with regional organizations should not lead to an abdication of responsibility on the part of the Security Council, whose primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. The United Nations should not shy away from this Charter-mandated responsibility simply because a particular conflict situation is complex.

The Millennium Declaration development goals highlight 8 goals and 18 targets; we appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in grouping them together. While my delegation agrees that these goals represent a partnership between the developed and developing countries, we reiterate that these goals can be achieved only with significant financial resources. We call on developed countries to honour their commitments, especially in implementing the target of providing official development assistance (ODA). The International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, next year, will be a benchmark to assess the seriousness of developed countries in honouring this commitment. Developed countries must also distinguish between ODA and humanitarian assistance.

Globalization also brings with it the advance of information and communication technology (ICT). While developed countries rapidly accelerate forward on ICT superhighways, developing countries are left far behind, thereby contributing further to their marginalization. Malaysia is pleased to note that the ICT Task Force will be launched tomorrow in an effort to bridge the digital divide, foster digital opportunities and put ICT at the service of development for all.

In the promotion of human rights, we should be open to new ideas and concepts and be fully cognizant

of the fact that the world is multicultural and interdependent. We are gratified to note that there have been certain fundamental changes in attitudes towards human rights. For instance, there is now the recognition that human rights violations are perpetrated not only by States but by non-State actors, as well. At the same time, there is the recognition that in a complex world, when difficult choices need to be made, sometimes the sum of the rights of individuals who constitute a group must take precedence over the rights of an individual within that group.

Malaysia has always been a strong believer in human rights and observes the provisions of existing human rights instruments, even if it has not become a party to some of them for legal, technical reasons. We believe that the enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to development, is the cornerstone of peace and security and the key to preventing conflicts. We believe that human rights should be pursued in a holistic and integrated approach and that civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are indivisible and interdependent. The exclusive pursuit and promotion of one set of rights over others only builds up a confrontational atmosphere. We also believe that the responsibility to protect and promote human rights in the country rests with the authority of the Government, while we recognize the need for an independent human rights body to monitor developments pertaining to human rights.

In this regard, we are pleased to report that, since its establishment, the Human Rights Commission in Malaysia has served the people well and is functioning effectively, with full independence.

On the reform of the United Nations Security Council, it is most discouraging that after more than eight years of discussion, the Working Group is still unable to make any progress on major issues, in particular the veto. If progress is to be made at all, the necessary flexibility must be shown by all concerned, particularly the permanent members.

Malaysia is gratified that with the agreement last year on the revised scale of assessment, the financial situation of the United Nations has now been put on a sound footing. We are pleased that the payment of current and outstanding arrears has improved and that Member States are increasingly remitting their contributions in full and on time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the agreement arrived at in the spirit of flexibility and compromise, will be upheld.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): The history of the United Nations is replete with summits and declarations. They come, and they go. Nothing much changes. It is therefore easy to become cynical both about summits and their results. If we do not want the Millennium Summit and its results to be tarnished with such cynicism, we have to demonstrate that this time things will be different and that we will actually be serious about matching our beautiful words with beautiful deeds.

In some ways, we may have already turned a new corner. The road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration is a rather unusual United Nations document. It does not merely produce additional words. It lays out a set of quantifiable targets and measurable indicators. Perhaps one of the most useful sections of the document is found in pages 56 to 58, which spells out 8 goals, 18 targets and more than 40 concrete indicators. The next step we should take is to put these targets and indicators on a web site and to have bar charts and graphs with clear trend lines indicating whether we are succeeding or failing in meeting these targets. If we do this, it will be a significant step towards transparency.

But all these steps will be small. The really big steps we need to take are to actually implement the commitments we made in the Millennium Declaration. As the Secretary-General notes in his report,

> "Most of the targets set by the Millennium Declaration were not new. ... What is needed, therefore, is not more technical or feasibility studies. Rather, States need to demonstrate the political *will* to carry out commitments already given and to implement strategies already worked out." (*A/56/326, paras. 6 and 7*)

The Secretary-General is right. None of the targets or commitments are new. The question should therefore be, why have we not implemented them in the past?

In order to ensure that the United Nations does not once again fail to implement agreed commitments, we, the Member States, which ultimately make up the United Nations, should complement the excellent road map produced by the Secretariat by doing an objective analysis of the roadblocks that have prevented implementation of previous commitments. The

Secretariat cannot do this for us. Members of the Secretariat cannot criticize their employers, the Member States. We, the Member States, have to criticize ourselves.

To get a good discussion going on this subject, we would like to suggest a few roadblocks with which we have to come to terms. The first structural roadblock is that, despite all our talk of belonging to one global village, we still do not think of humanity as one community. To some extent the Millennium Declaration recognizes this when it says, in paragraph 2,

> "We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level."

The simple truth is that few nations take these collective responsibilities seriously.

There is a simple structural reason for this. Nation States put national interests far ahead of collective interests. This, again, is a simple result of the fact that national leaders get elected when they put national interests ahead of global interests. They get booted out of office if they put global interests ahead of national interests. This is not an abstract point. It applies to some of the specific goals set out in the Millennium Declaration.

Take, for example, one of the key goals of the Millennium Declaration: to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population whose income is less than one dollar a day. The only way for poor countries to increase their income is either by aid or by trade. Aid is falling, and we know that it will not rise in the near future. In the field of trade, there does not appear to be much good news either. The average tariff on goods from developing countries is 30 per cent higher than the global average. If we want to increase the income of poor countries, the tariff on their goods should be much lower, not higher, than the global average.

Is there a way around this structural roadblock of national interests? Fortunately, there is. The way around it is to acknowledge that sometimes global interests serve national interests. There is a perceptive article in the current issue of *Fortune* magazine, dated 3 December 2001, by 2001 Nobel Prize winner Professor Joseph Stiglitz. He astutely titled his article "You have to walk the talk" — a title which, in fact, should be the theme of our debate today. In his article, Professor Stiglitz says,

> "The war against terrorism has brought home forcefully that we share a common planet, that we are interdependent, and that if we are to address the world's central problems, we will have to work together."

However, in the same article, Professor Stiglitz warns us that there is a huge gap between what the developed countries preach and what they practice. For example, while they work to force developing countries to open their markets, they keep their own markets closed to many imports from developing countries in well-known areas, such as agriculture and textiles. The message from Stiglitz is simple and clear: if the developing countries are to be helped — and clearly in the commitments we made in the Millennium Declaration we are declaring that we do want to help the developing countries — the developed countries will have to make real changes in their economic policies. And to do this, they must first acknowledge that it is in their own self-interest to support such global interests. The Stiglitz article is also available on Fortune.com and is worth reading in full.

The second structural roadblock that the Millennium Declaration has to deal with is that international relations are driven by considerations of power, not by considerations of ideals, reason or even logic. Again, a simple way of explaining this is to look at one of the key goals and targets set out in the road map. One key goal set out on page 15 is to "minimize the adverse effects of United Nations economic sanctions on innocent populations". To help achieve this, the road map suggests that

> "A permanent sanctions monitoring mechanism needs to be developed in order to ensure better targeting and enforcement of smart sanctions and to bring non-cooperation and non-compliance information to the attention of the Security Council." (*A/56/326, para. 59*)

On the same page, the road map delicately touches upon the work of the Security Council Working Group on Sanctions, which was established on 17 April 2000.

What the road map fails to mention is that this Working Group was given a deadline of November 2000 to complete its report: one year ago. One year has passed; the report is clearly long overdue. At the beginning of each month, we discuss in the Security Council the Council's programme of work. Each month Singapore reminds the Council that the report is overdue. Each month nothing happens. And each month we are given no answers as to why the report of this Working Group, which is one year overdue, has not been issued. We can only guess at the reasons: that the interests of some of the powerful do not lie in the completion of the work of this Working Group or — what is more important — in the setting up of a permanent sanctions monitoring mechanism.

Unfortunately, we do not see an easy way around this roadblock. Considerations of power have driven international relations for thousands of years. This will not change overnight. But perhaps if we can get the powerful to see that it is in their own self-interest to help the weak and the vulnerable, things might change. To be fair, there are some hopeful signs that this may be happening.

We have discussed only two possible roadblocks in the hope that they will serve as illustrative examples. Our intentions are constructive. In the real world it is dangerous when driving to look only at the map and to ignore the actual roadblocks that may not appear on it. We still believe that the goals of the road map are achievable. I will support the draft resolution that is being drafted to endorse the road map. However, when we set about implementing it we should keep our eyes open, watch out for the roadblocks and drive hopefully and carefully.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus welcomes the draft resolution that has been introduced by the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the subject of today's agenda item. We share the view of the vast majority of Member States that spoke in the general debate regarding the need to continue United Nations efforts to implement the provisions of the Millennium Declaration.

The rapid pace of human development is constantly making adjustments to the range and content of the tasks involved in ensuring peace, security and development. A year ago, at the turn of the century and the beginning of the new millennium, the leaders of States Members of the United Nations set forth the basic list of tasks that need to be tackled if our world is to become a better place. Belarus has constantly emphasized its commendation of the Millennium Declaration. We consider it a brilliant outcome of collective wisdom at the current stage of humankind's development.

The events of 11 September 2001 have once again forced us to review, and make certain adjustments to, our programme of action. In this context, combating international terrorism as a global phenomenon and threat to civilization is undoubtedly one of the priorities in the work of the United Nations. At the same time, Belarus fully agrees with the approach taken by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which he set out in his statement at the opening of the general debate of the current session. Indeed, as he said, none of the items that were before the United Nations just prior to the acts of terrorism is any less urgent today. In fact, the manifestation of terrorism on such an unprecedented scale has emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to resolving the problems of today — an approach based on the Millennium Declaration.

The report of the Secretary-General, which contains a plan of action for the implementation of the provisions of the Summit, is regarded by our country as extremely interesting. This document is particularly relevant for my country in view of the fact that the Government is completing its work on preparing a domestic conceptual programme on how to implement the provisions of the Summit. We believe that it is only through a constant exchange of views and through taking into account the individual vision of each and every country with regard to the process of implementing the Declaration that it will be possible to make this document and the plan of action both realistic and feasible. We are prepared for such an exchange. We believe that, at a certain stage, it would useful to consider a specific mechanism to carry out this discussion on a permanent and regular basis and to monitor the implementation of the Summit's decisions.

Belarus has frequently declared its position with regard to a number of areas examined in the Secretary-General's plan of action, both in plenary meetings of the current session and in the general debate. The times we live in make it necessary for us urgently to take practical steps. We are convinced that it is only in that way that we can make the process of implementing the

decisions of the Summit effective and that we can demonstrate to the people of our States the unique possibilities inherent in the Organization in this age of globalization. I assure the Assembly of the closest partnership and cooperation of Belarus in that connection.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes with great interest the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration that has been presented to us by the Secretary-General. We believe that this debate should allow us to identify clearly what we Member States view as the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies and courses of action proposed by the Secretary-General in pursuit of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration, while taking into account the need to adopt a balanced, comprehensive, coordinated and integrated manner, in accordance with resolution 55/162.

It is in that spirit that I would like to point out that the delegation of Peru has a generally favourable view of the road map. Not only do we agree with the proposals made therein, but we also support, promote and apply many of its recommendations.

Indeed, two weeks ago, my country completed its ratification of the important instrument that establishes the International Criminal Court, whose entry into force will make it possible to combat impunity. We have also joined the 12 sectoral conventions against terrorism. Moreover, we are working on national legislation for the freezing of funds and other financial assets of terrorist groups. Similarly, we have complied with the obligations of the Ottawa Convention by completely destroying our existing stocks of anti-personnel mines, and we have continued to promote the process of reducing arms expenditures in the Latin American region.

In addition, my Government is firmly convinced that the full protection and promotion of human rights, good governance, democracy and human development are fundamental to a climate of justice and social peace, not only in my country but throughout the world. I should point out that last week, during the debate on the situation of human rights in the world, a large number of Member States drew attention to the firm political will of the Peruvian Government to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, strengthen the judicial system, promote the struggle against drugs and consolidate the Peruvian economy.

The fact that we fully agree with many of the proposals for the implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration does not mean that we do not have some concerns and specific points to express.

The document should clearly reflect not just commitments at the domestic level but also clear-cut and serious efforts on the part of the international community to bring about the needed greater transparency and better management with regard to the world economy. This should be reflected in the approach taken to the developmental dimension of the Millennium Declaration. In this regard, the actions suggested are far from adequate to meet the needs of the developing countries. Compliance by 2015 with the major international development goals set out at the Millennium Summit will itself require an additional $50 billion in official development assistance. A further $4 billion a year will be needed for humanitarian assistance, while meeting the worldwide need for public services will require an additional $20 billion a year.

While the outcome of the recent Doha meeting gives us reason for hope, it also raises certain doubts. We are hopeful because the regimes for the protection of intellectual property and for the protection of public health have been brought closer together. However, we should ensure that this optimism leads to concrete results and that we avoid the frustrations associated with the Uruguay Round. After more than 10 years of trade liberalization as a result of the Uruguay Round and national adjustments that have affected our countries, the fact is that today more than 100 developing countries have failed to achieve sustained growth in their per capita income, as recent human rights reports have indicated.

The multilateral system of the World Trade Organization (WTO) could not exist without a stable financing system, and we have seen a series of trade integration projects collapse for solely financial reasons. Trade cannot function in a world that is financially unstable. That is why we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the International Conference on Financing for Development achieves concrete results. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to deal together with the current instability in the financial system. We must ensure that the financial system is stable; otherwise, the outcome of Doha will never be translated into reality.

We were also struck by the general way in which the road map report deals with the implementation of the objectives. We would have preferred to see greater specificity in the suggested strategies, and more specific appeals for achieving the goals set at the Millennium Summit, including those relating to strengthening the role of the General Assembly and the broad reform of the Security Council. We believe that there is a considerable gap between the formulation of the strategies and their implementation, as well as a clear absence of direction with regard to modalities and actions to be adopted by the whole of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO.

In this context, I would like to point out that resolution 55/162 calls on the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system and the WTO to strengthen and adjust their medium-term activities, programmes and strategies, while also recognizing that additional resources will be necessary for the implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration relating to poverty eradication.

My delegation would like to point out that we wholeheartedly support the document's clear commitment to the reduction of poverty and the achievement of the other international development goals. However, we believe that the process of turning international commitments into national plans of action falls exclusively within the competence of Governments and that it is therefore for them to bear the major responsibility for reducing poverty at the national level.

We believe that indicators are useful tools for evaluating the degree to which objectives are achieved. It would be helpful to study the use of such indicators with regard to other areas of the Millennium Declaration. We note, however, that a greater degree of precision and further preparatory work on the indicators is required in relation to goal 8, described in the annex to the road map, which will make it possible to measure progress in relation to, for example, the sustainability of long-term external debt. However, it is absolutely essential that indicators not be distorted by incomplete information and that the process of selecting and defining them be the result of direct consultations with Member States.

Furthermore, the delegation of Peru would like to stress once again the importance it attaches to the fight against drugs and the need for it to be highlighted and defined clearly in the road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. My country has made determined efforts in this respect, and we believe that international support is absolutely essential for programmes for alternative development, in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility.

Finally, with regard to the reference in paragraph 136 of the report to the distribution of official development assistance, we believe, in keeping with the recommendation of the Zedillo report, that assistance for development should be distributed on the basis of two criteria. The first is the extent of poverty in each country, which must be measured specifically and objectively — not on the basis of the criteria referred to in the report, which is to say the needs of countries, as that constitutes a subjective variable. The second is the extent to which the policies of each country are committed to poverty reduction.

In conclusion, we believe that the road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration is a useful document, but that it needs to be improved in the light of the comments of Member States. We believe that this debate will help in that respect and that, given its importance, in the future this subject should be discussed at the beginning of the General Assembly's session.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wanted to participate in this debate, albeit briefly, for two reasons. The first is the importance of the subject. We are discussing nothing less than our priority agenda for the decades to come. In this context, I am speaking on behalf of the group of Central American countries. Secondly, on a more personal note, it was my honour to serve, together with my colleague from New Zealand, under the leadership of the President of the fifty-fourth session, as co-facilitator of the draft document that eventually became the Millennium Declaration. The subject is thus of special interest to me — an interest that commingles matters of the highest importance for the future of humanity with the more mundane concern resulting from my having been involved in the preparatory activities for the Summit.

When our heads of State and Government met in New York slightly over a year ago, their global objective was to achieve a better world that would be

safer, provide greater well-being and be more democratic and more responsible with respect to sustainability. As of today, we cannot affirm that progress has been made in the achievement of that objective; rather, the reverse is true. The global economy shows clear symptoms of a recession and the events that occurred in our host country on 11 September have injected a note of uncertainty into all of our activities. We must persevere, however, since the Millennium Declaration embodies a long-term objective with concrete, viable and attainable goals. It is not, moreover, just another declaration. We are all agreed that the Millennium Declaration is a document of historic significance that is binding on all of us, individually and collectively.

It is therefore important that we continue to design the plan of action necessary for the fulfilment of the commitments contained in the Declaration and most eloquently summarized in the annex of the report that the Secretary-General has submitted to us in document A/56/326. The report is a step in that direction and we are grateful for its preparation.

The first observation we would like to make is that the General Assembly may have erred in requesting, in its resolution 55/162, a "road map", for, in the view of my delegation, the Millennium Declaration itself constitutes that road map and what is now sought is, precisely, the manner in which it should be implemented. In other words, if the exercise in which we are engaged were legal in nature, the Declaration would be a statute, whereas the document now before us would be a regulation. I point this out because our comments on this document are in line with that interpretation.

In this vein, we believe that the document not only makes some headway in outlining strategies that can render the guiding principles contained in the Declaration more concrete, but also ties in with something of which the report reminds us: the integrated and interdependent nature of the individual actions that are part of the approaches advocated in both the Millennium Declaration and the report. In incorporating into each section, under the objective pursued, a paragraph on strategies for moving forward, the document offers concrete guidelines that are no doubt a step in the right direction. We also find useful the assessment of the situation that appears in each section and describes the gains made and shortfalls identified in the fulfilment of each of the goals set out for our heads of State.

Another merit of the document is that it recalls the transnational character of virtually all mankind's activities. That is because the goals invariably involve commitments to be assumed at the level of each country — often at the level of each community — and others to be adopted in the universal, regional or subregional areas. This reminds us of the enormous potential of international cooperation, a central pillar of our Organization, and, within it, of the enormous potential inherent in sharing "best practices" in the various components of the road map.

The document may be somewhat defective, however, in addressing the means of implementing the strategies proposed. No one can, to be sure, take exception to such desiderata as enhancing cooperation, assisting States in fulfilling their commitments or working towards obtaining resources. Generally speaking, however, the document fails to specify how those ends are to be achieved.

This characteristic is also present in section III, on development and poverty eradication. In particular, the enumeration in paragraphs 86, 90, 92 and 103 of strategies for reducing poverty appears very weak, especially in the light of the wealth of commitments and plans of action already adopted, including those resulting from the World Summit for Social Development and Copenhagen+5. Paradoxically, one of the relatively most developed sections is that dealing with financing for development in paragraphs 129 to 150. What is paradoxical is that it is precisely in this area that we shall have an opportunity to develop our ideas in the future, including when we meet in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002.

As regards the road ahead, we harbour some doubts as to the advisability of the Secretary-General's submitting a report — distinct from his annual report on the work of the Organization — on progress in fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Declaration, as proposed in paragraph 305 of the document. If that Declaration is our road map, the annual report could very well analyse the work of the Organization precisely from the perspective of the decisions taken by our heads of State and Government. Although we do not wish to insist on the matter, it inclines us towards considering the convenience of a single consolidated report. On the other hand, we have

no major objections to the list of themes proposed in paragraph 306, which would enable the integrated and cross-cutting nature of the commitments set out in the Declaration to be balanced by the focus that would be given to a particular theme each year.

Finally, another minor flaw we find in the report is that — perhaps understandably, since it is in the nature of a report submitted by the Secretariat to the Member States — in dealing with section VIII of the Declaration, it shuns the most thorny issues relating to the strengthening of the United Nations. This leaves a gap, since, arguably, the fulfilment of many of the goals set out in the Declaration requires the improvement of the system by which our Organization is governed. Over the past two months we have, in this body, pointed this out on three occasions. The events of 11 September have highlighted an imperative of which we have been aware all along: that the time has come to fulfil the commitment contained in paragraph 30 of the Millennium Declaration, particularly as regards the General Assembly and the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

In brief, we believe that document A/56/326 is a useful complement to the Millennium Declaration in that it orients the bulk of our activities within the Organization and endows them with cohesion and consistency. As the document itself points out in paragraph 4, "a coordinated approach can yield much more than the sum of its parts". We therefore feel that the report provides an important guide for our work both at the present session and at subsequent sessions.

Mr. Rabgye (Bhutan): The Millennium Summit was a landmark event in the United Nations. Our heads of State and Government reaffirmed the international goals that had been discussed in the several world conferences that took place during the 1990s. They took a firm stand on the issues of poverty alleviation, HIV/AIDS and other key issues relating to social and economic development. They provided specific time frames for the implementation of the many goals that they took up at their discussions. Hence, we consider the Millennium Declaration to be a firm mandate to the United Nations from the world's leaders.

For its part, the General Assembly ensured that the Millennium Declaration would not become a lost event in the annals of our Organization. Through its resolution 55/162, the Assembly ensured that there would be necessary follow-up, which involved the preparation of a road map by the Secretary-General. My delegation has examined this document and would like to compliment the Secretary-General for that valuable, goal-oriented document. We understand the difficulty in preparing such a report, as it covers practically the entire United Nations agenda and will involve the United Nations organs and specialized agencies and affiliated bodies, including the Bretton Woods institutions.

The Secretary-General has called upon Member States to translate rhetoric into deeds and action. In fact, this is the need of the hour. The international goals cannot be fulfilled in a void. All countries need to take concrete action in keeping with their commitments and, even more so, as responsible and concerned members of the international community.

We need positive attitudes and the firm political will to resolve conflicts, some of which have persisted for decades. In fact, when we examine those conflicts, they have even lost or are beginning to lose their relevance, especially in the context of an increasingly interdependent world. Globalization and the merging of societies and economies are resulting in a global village. A more far-sighted approach may now be possible, with economic and social development taking centre stage to political domination and territorial control. If we view these issues in the context of globalization and interdependence, we begin to observe increasingly the ingredients of solutions to problems, and the pieces are, we hope, falling into place.

My delegation is keenly aware of the after-effects of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September. Those events have had worldwide economic, social and psychological repercussions. The world economy was already in a downturn prior to those incidents. The 2001 *World Economic and Social Survey* had lowered the projected growth rate of gross world product for 2002 to around 2.5 per cent. After the terrorist attacks, that figure was lowered to 1.4 per cent. This overall picture of the world economy, if looked at in conjunction with national and regional economies, gives us a grim picture. In fact, for the developing countries the picture looks even worse. Recovery will come around, but the question is how long will it take and at what pace. And then there is always the danger of terrorism raising its ugly head and disrupting the normal course of development yet again.

As we attempt to implement and review the results of international decisions in the coming years, the General Assembly will be able to fathom where the international community stands in implementing the goals of the Summit. Obviously progress will depend on Member States and international organizations, including civil society. Since resource constraints have been a major hurdle in implementing the goals, developed countries and the Bretton Woods institutions, including regional financial banks, will all have to revamp their activities.

In the context of implementing the Millennium Declaration's goals, my delegation attaches particular importance to alleviating hunger and poverty and effectively tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including malaria and tuberculosis. Close on the heels of those vital issues of life and death for many inhabitants of our planet comes the saving of our environment from impending disaster.

The Secretary-General has emphasized that the dire issues confronting the international community before the terrorist attacks of 11 September are still very much present. They have not taken a back seat, nor can they be given less attention. In fact, it is a challenge to the international community to muster the required political will to implement the Millennium Declaration with greater vigour than ever before, despite the war launched against international terrorism.

In that context, the International Conference on Financing for Development, which is to be held in Mexico next year, will be an important, and even crucial, forum where the political will of the international community for financing the objectives of the Millennium Declaration will come to the fore. My delegation is of the view that official development assistance has to be substantially increased and emphasis placed on that form of financing, especially when it comes to the least developed countries. That is equally so when it comes to confronting the scourge of HIV/AIDS and halving by 2015 the numbers of those now trying to survive on less than a dollar a day.

In Bhutan we have made every attempt to implement a people-centred and sustainable development process. We have preserved our forests and protected the environment. That approach will continue and be strengthened in the future. In that context, we consider the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which is to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, to be another important event where many of the goals set by the Millennium Declaration will be considered.

Finally, when it comes to considering the progress made from year to year on the Millennium Declaration, we look forward to the Secretary-General's periodic reports on the situation. What is sorely needed now is to translate rhetoric and commitments into action. My delegation is confident that with growing cooperation, the process of globalization and a visible increase in the willingness of Member States to unite for a common cause, the international community can meet the challenges that lie ahead.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.